CONTROVERSY

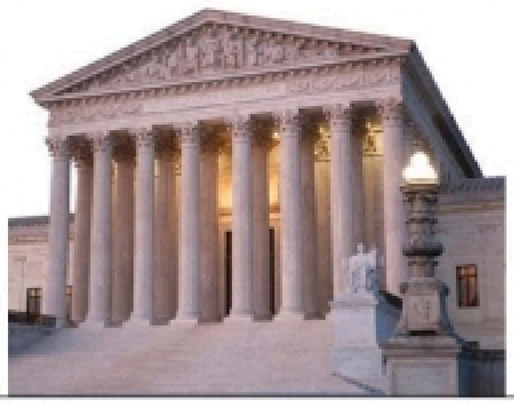
CAN BERNIE BROADEN HIS APPEAL?

p.6

TALKING POINTS

Bringing back classical architecture

p.17



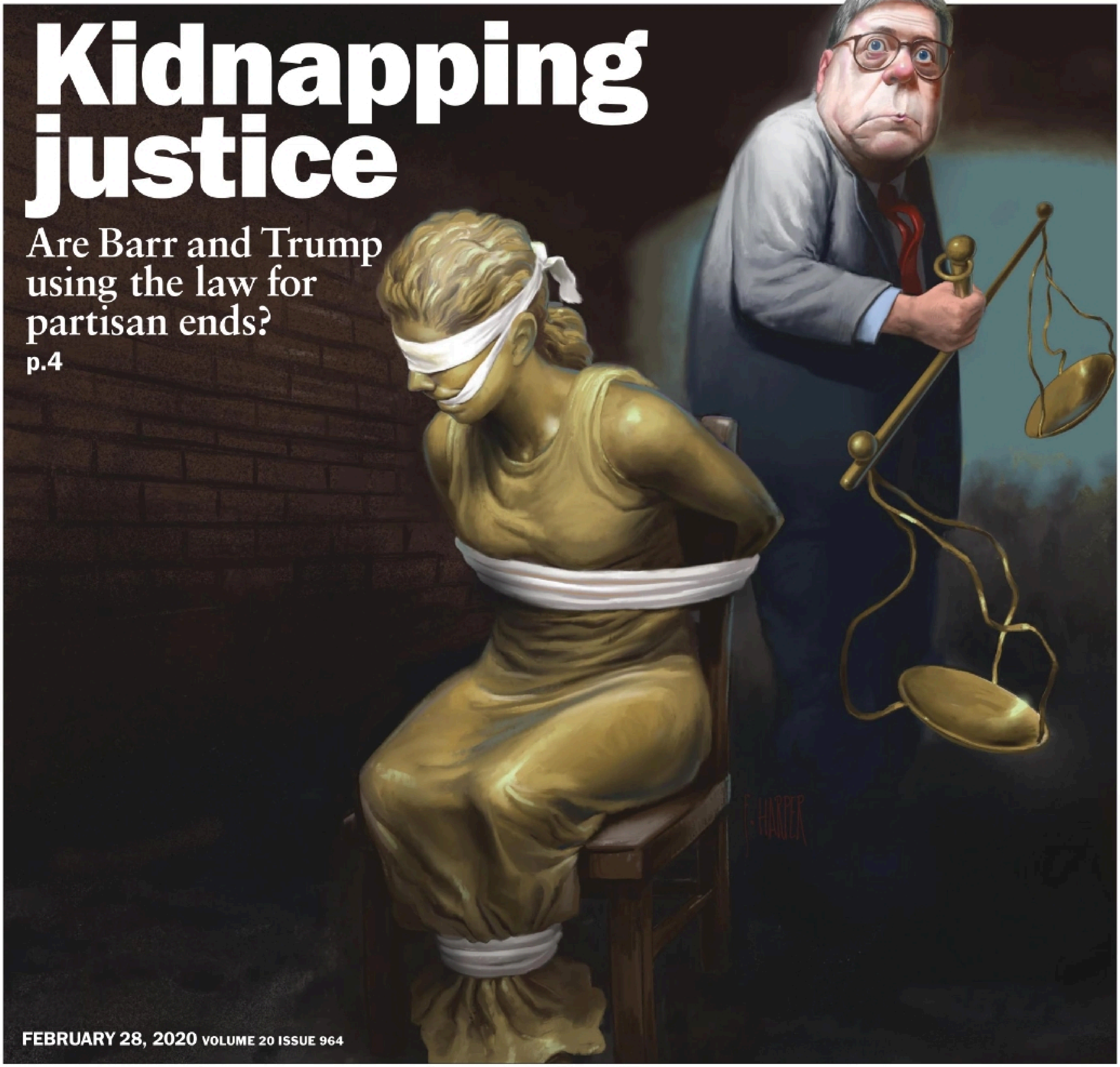
PEOPLE

What Eilish is hiding from

p.10

THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA



Kidnapping justice

Are Barr and Trump using the law for partisan ends?

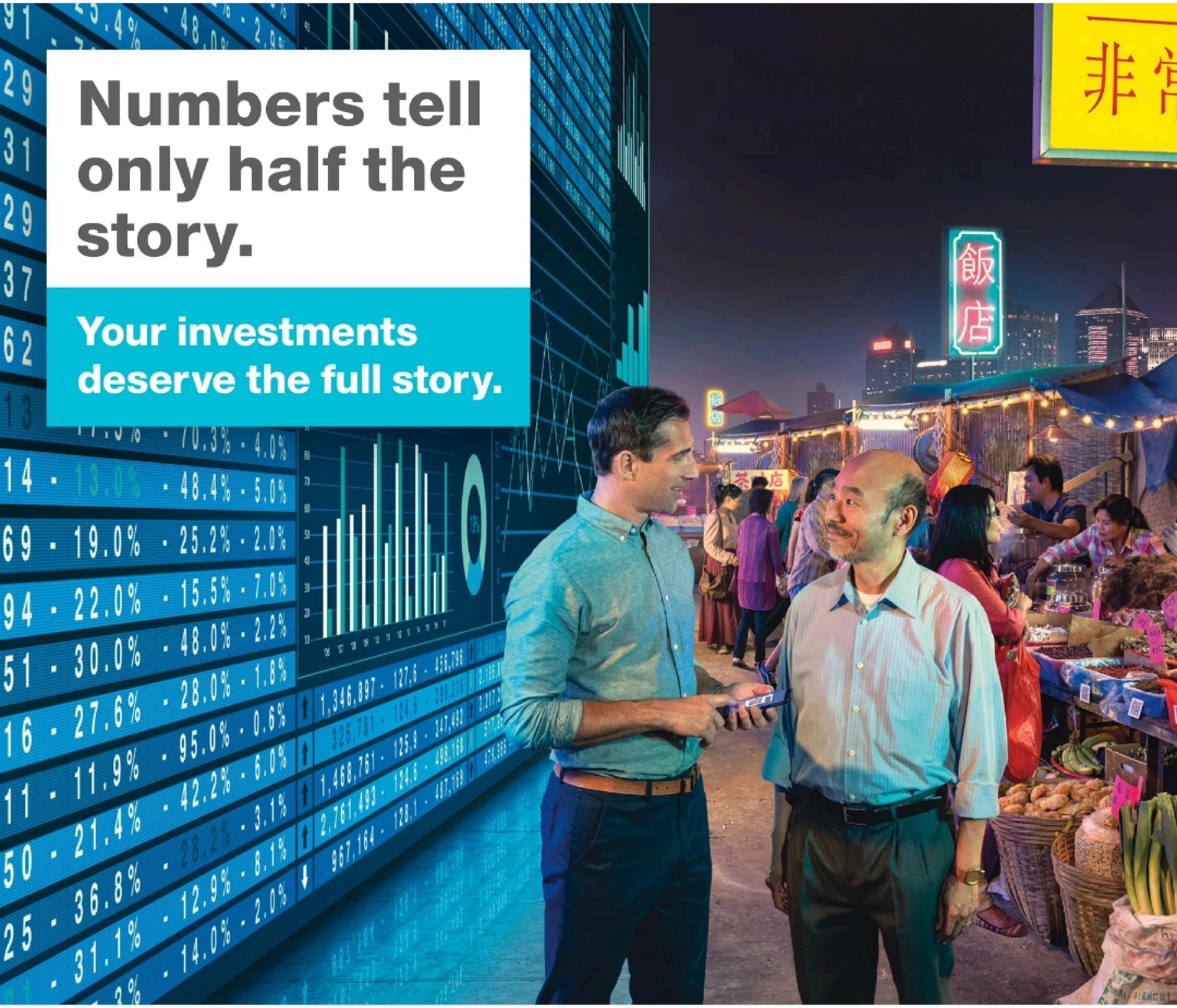
p.4

FEBRUARY 28, 2020 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 964

VISIT…

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

T.RowePrice®
INVEST WITH CONFIDENCE


Numbers tell only half the story.
Your investments deserve the full story.
飯店

Strategic investing takes us beyond the numbers. That's why over 425[1] of our experts go out in the field to examine investment opportunities firsthand—like mobile payment adoption in new markets around the world. Our rigorous approach helps us select and manage investments for our funds.

Put our strategic investing approach to work for you today.
troweprice.com/fullstory | 1-877-872-5475

Consider the investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses carefully before investing. For a prospectus or, if available, a summary prospectus containing this and other information, call 1-877-804-2315. Read it carefully.

[1] Investment professionals as of 12/31/19.

All funds are subject to market risk, including possible loss of principal.
T. Rowe Price Investment Services, Inc., Distributor.

Editor's letter

Bill Barr has some concerns. He got his job as attorney general by telling President Trump that the Constitution gives him "illimitable discretion" over Justice Department prosecutions; therefore, Trump's numerous attempts to block or end the Mueller investigation did not constitute obstruction of justice. Trump's Article II authority is so expansive, Barr has stated, that neither Congress nor the courts can interfere in his policy decisions or compel him to release information. A delighted Trump has taken Barr's imperial theory of the presidency both seriously and literally. "Article II," he has said, "allows me to do whatever I want as president." Barr, however, is now complaining that the president's tweeting about criminal cases was "making it impossible for me to do my job." (See Main Stories.) Dr. Frankenstein has his regrets.

The president, on the other hand, feels freed of all restraints. Proclaiming himself the country's "chief law-enforcement officer," Trump has demanded that a federal judge order a new trial for Roger Stone, a convicted felon who, abundant evidence shows, served as Trump's secret conduit to WikiLeaks and Russian military hackers in 2016. Trump has also raged at the injustice of a prison term for former campaign manager Paul Manafort (another conduit to the Russians) and wants his former national security adviser Michael Flynn—who hid a $600,000 payment from the Turkish government—to go free, too. Sooner rather than later, Trump will pardon them all. This week, Trump suddenly issued a blizzard of pardons to swampy public figures convicted of bribery, tax fraud, corruption, and making false statements—crimes that, for some reason, Trump doesn't consider serious. Why would he stick his neck out for crooks and con men as he heads into a reelection campaign? After surviving the Mueller investigation, impeachment, and innumerable scandals, Trump has concluded he has "an absolute right" to do whatever he wants, just as Bill Barr told him. And he may be right.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

NEWS

4 **Main stories**
Attorney General Bill Barr in the spotlight; the world tries to stop a coronavirus pandemic

6 **Controversy of the week**
Can Sen. Bernie Sanders win over socialism-skeptical voters?

7 **The U.S. at a glance**
President Trump goes on a pardoning spree; the Boy Scouts of America files for bankruptcy

8 **The world at a glance**
Far-right terrorist plot foiled in Germany; a wall for Trump in India

10 **People**
Billie Eilish's stylish defiance; Macaulay Culkin finds peace at last

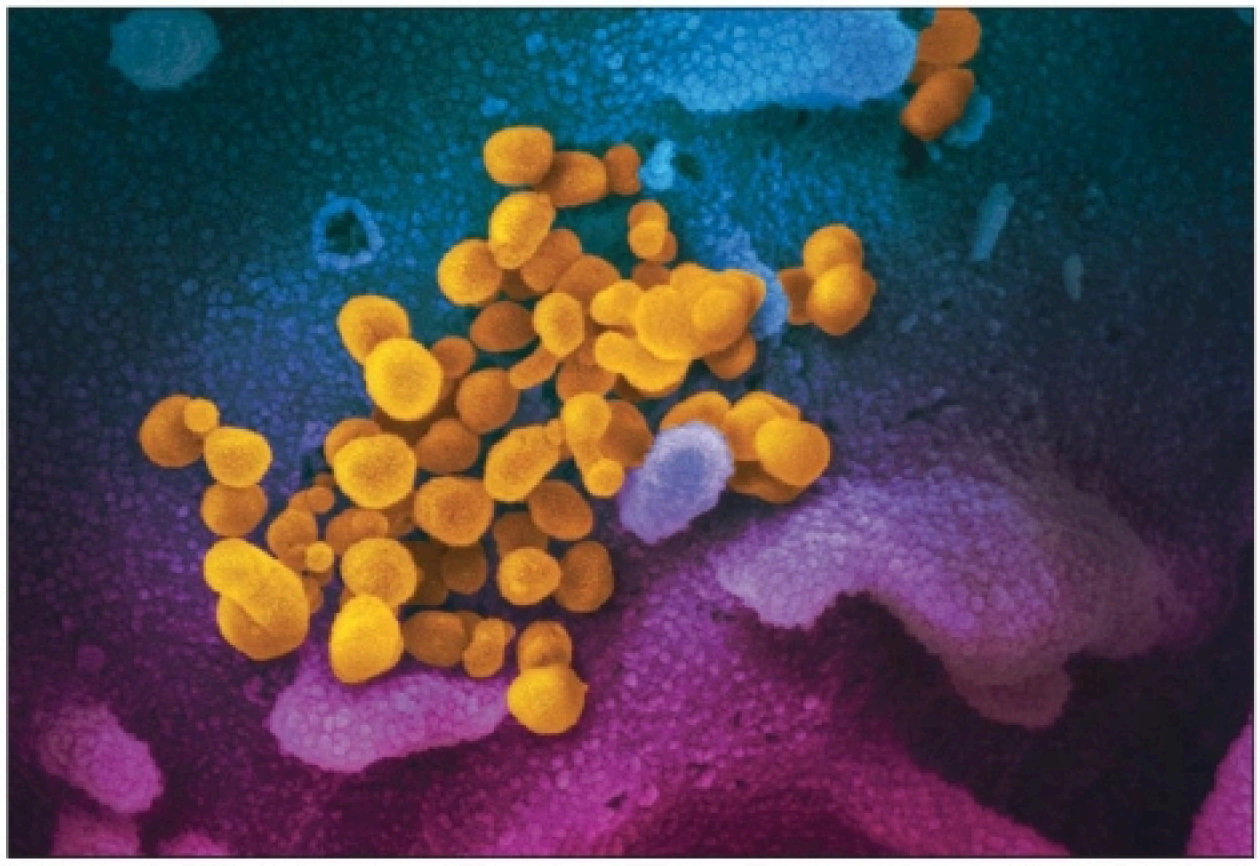
11 **Briefing**
The scam PACs that are conning political donors out of millions of dollars

12 **Best U.S. columns**
The death of political transparency; the folly of compulsory voting; a likability trap for women

14 **Best European columns**
A fight over trans rights divides the Left in Britain

16 **Talking points**
The fight over airline seats gets physical; John Kelly speaks out; should government buildings go classical?

AP; Getty


A close-up of the fast-spreading coronavirus (pages 5, 32)

ARTS

22 **Books**
The FBI versus corn-stealing Chinese spies

23 **Author of the week**
Eoin Colfer dabbles in "dragon noir"

24 **Art & Music**
The master artists of Africa's Sahel region finally get their due

25 **Film**
A charming take on Jane Austen's *Emma*

Billie Eilish (p.10)

LEISURE

27 **Food & Drink**
Three low-alcohol wines that are worth toasting

28 **Travel**
Exploring the many flavors of Spain's Asturias region

29 **Consumer**
Five buzzworthy home espresso machines

BUSINESS

32 **News at a glance**
Apple feels the effects of coronavirus; Amazon takes on the Pentagon

33 **Making money**
Could ISAs fix the student loan crisis?

34 **Best columns**
Trump's latest pick for the Fed in trouble; a victim of friendly fire in the trade war

THE WEEK

Editor-in-chief: William Falk

Managing editors: Theunis Bates, Mark Gimein
Deputy editor/International: Susan Caskie
Deputy editor/Arts: Chris Mitchell
Senior editors: Chris Erikson, Danny Funt, Michael Jaccarino, Dale Obbie, Zach Schonbrun, Hallie Stiller
Art director: Dan Josephs
Photo editor: Mark Rykoff
Copy editors: Jane A. Halsey, Jay Wilkins
Researchers: Joyce Chu, Alisa Partlan
Contributing editors: Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

Chief sales and marketing officer: Adam Dub
SVP, marketing: Lisa Boyars
Executive account director: Sara Schiano
Midwest sales director: John Goldrick
Southeast director: Jana Robinson
West Coast executive director: Tony Imperato
Director, direct response: Alexandra Riera
Research and insights manager: Joan Cheung
Programmatic revenue and ad operations director: Isaiah Ward

Chief executive officer: Sara O'Connor
Chief operating & financial officer: Kevin E. Morgan
Director of financial reporting: Arielle Starkman
Consumer marketing director: Leslie Guarnieri
HR manager: Joy Hart
Operations manager: Cassandra Mondonedo

Chairman: Jack Griffin
Dennis Group CEO: James Tye

U.K. founding editor: Jolyon Connell

Company founder: Felix Dennis

Visit us at TheWeek.com.
For customer service go to www.TheWeek.com/service or phone us at 1-877-245-8151.

Renew a subscription at www.RenewTheWeek.com or give a gift at www.GiveTheWeek.com.

Barr's plea to Trump to stop tweeting

What happened

'Impossible for me to do my job'

Getty

Attorney General William Barr was under fire from all directions this week, as more than 2,000 former Department of Justice officials from both parties called on him to resign and accused him of repeatedly flouting the department's "sacred obligation" to administer equal justice under the law. The extraordinary open letter came after the nation's top lawman watered down the department's sentencing recommendation of seven to nine years in prison for President Trump's longtime friend and political fixer Roger Stone, 67. Barr's intervention led four federal prosecutors to resign from the case, with one quitting the DOJ entirely. In their letter, the ex–U.S. attorneys, trial lawyers, and other DOJ officials accused Barr of blatantly politicizing the department. "Governments that use the enormous power of law enforcement to punish their enemies and reward their allies are not constitutional republics; they are autocracies," they wrote. Meanwhile, the Federal Judges Association, a collection of 1,100 jurists devoted to an independent judiciary, called "an emergency meeting" to discuss what it called "a deepening crisis" caused by Barr and Trump's intervention in politically sensitive cases.

Trump had congratulated Barr for changing the sentencing recommendations on Stone, saying they were "a disgrace" and a "miscarriage of justice." The next day, Barr said in a televised interview that Trump should "stop the tweeting" about DOJ cases because his comments "make it impossible for me to do my job." But Trump continued tweeting over ensuing days, and Barr reportedly told sources close to the president that if he didn't stop, he'd resign.

Democrats said Barr's involvement in the Stone sentencing was only the latest example of the attorney general taking charge of cases important to Trump. On Barr's orders, the department is pursuing investigations of former FBI and CIA officials involved in the Russia investigation. Barr has also set up a process to receive and vet information about Democrat Joe Biden that Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani is digging up from dodgy, pro-Russia sources in Ukraine. Two weeks ago, federal prosecutors changed their recommendation of six months in prison for former national security adviser Michael Flynn to probation. Last week, Barr tapped outside prosecutors to review not only Flynn's case but also a number of others described as politically sensitive.

What the editorials said

"Barr must go," said ***The Boston Globe***. In the year since his appointment, he's made a mockery of the DOJ's long-standing independence from the White House. He whitewashed special counsel Robert Mueller's report, attacked the DOJ's inspector general for finding no political bias in the original FBI investigation of Trump's campaign, and is now working fist-in-glove with Giuliani as he hunts for political dirt in Ukraine. Barr is upset by Trump's tweets because they expose him as "not an independent defender of the laws but as the servant of one man"—Trump.

"Trump is his own worst enemy," said ***The Wall Street Journal***. He should be celebrating his Senate acquittal, campaigning for re-election, and "enjoying the disarray of his opponents." Instead, his "relentless popping off" has handed Democrats another "scandal to flog" and undermined his attorney general, "whom he can ill afford to lose." With his reckless need to settle scores, Trump "is making millions of voters ask if they really want to take a risk on giving him so much power for another four years."

What the columnists said

Don't mistake Barr's rebuke of Trump for a principled stand, said **Jonathan Chait** in ***NYMag.com.*** Since becoming attorney general, Barr has transformed the Justice Department into Trump's "own private detective agency." But Barr understands that using the law to punish political adversaries and reward allies "requires a sheen of public legitimacy." That's why he took issue with Trump's tweets—the president keeps exposing the fact that he's "turned the legal system into a personal weapon."

The ongoing Democratic hysteria over Barr is "a cliché of the Trump era," said **Eddie Scarry** in ***WashingtonExaminer.com.*** Someone should tell the Resistance that "above the law" is a banal phrase that actually means "I don't like that." Critics should also consider the possibility that Barr "may have done the right thing for the right reason," said **Jonathan Turley** in ***The Hill.com.*** Before Trump started tweeting, many legal experts had conceded that seven to nine years for Stone "was excessive."

Not since Watergate have I seen such an "un-American" assault on "the core principles that have guided our justice system," said former Republican Deputy Attorney General **Donald Ayer** in ***TheAtlantic.com.*** "In chilling terms," Barr has repeatedly stated that the Constitution endows the president with "nearly autocratic powers," with total authority over the Justice Department and the right to order and end investigations. He insists that Congress and the courts have encroached on the presidency's autonomy and that their oversight is mere "harassment." Barr's America would be "a banana republic," and "it is not a place that anyone, including Trump voters, should want to go."

What next?

Barr's threat to resign has "understandably been met with skepticism," said **Aaron Blake** in ***The Washington Post***. But it should not be so easily discounted. Even before he publicly pleaded with the president to stop tweeting about criminal cases and investigations, Barr has been "asking the same thing privately, directly to Trump"—all to no avail. Trump rage-tweeted all weekend and into this week about the DOJ's decision to drop charges against former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe; then Trump unwisely attacked the federal judge overseeing the Stone sentencing. At some point, Barr will have to put "his money where his mouth is," or end up looking like Trump's "stooge." Meanwhile "Trump's post-acquittal rampage" continues, said **Susan Glasser** in ***The New Yorker.*** He's purging his administration of anyone he suspects of disloyalty, punishing New York state for investigating him, tweet-storming at his enemies, and leaving Washington on "five-alarm-fire, red-siren-for-our-democracy high alert." When the president is "so unhinged that even Bill Barr says he's out of control," you know we're in trouble.

Illustration by Fred Harper.
Cover photos from AP (3)

Fear and uncertainty as coronavirus outbreak spreads

Americans evacuated from the Diamond Princess

What happened

Public health officials in China and the West scrambled to slow the spread of the new coronavirus this week, amid growing fears that a global pandemic may be impossible to stop. The respiratory illness has so far infected more than 75,200 people and killed at least 2,006; more than 98 percent of all cases have occurred in China. Authorities there said the spread of the epidemic appeared to be slowing, but with the number of cases outside China surging, health experts warned against optimism that the disease might be peaking. At least 47 infections have been reported in Europe and more than 70 in Japan. Pandemic fears jumped after the *Westerdam*, a cruise ship that was repeatedly turned away from Asian ports over coronavirus fears, disembarked more than 1,000 passengers in Cambodia. Those passengers then headed to airports; one, an American, tested positive upon reaching Malaysia. "This could be a turning point," said William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University.

A second cruise ship docked in Japan, the *Diamond Princess*, reported more than 600 cases. Some 300 Americans on board, including 14 who'd tested positive, were airlifted to U.S. military bases, where they will be quarantined for two weeks. That brought the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. to 29, but experts say the total number is likely far higher. Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the FDA, told Congress that the U.S. is detecting "25 percent of cases at best." Asha George, head of the Bipartisan Commission on Biodefense, said the country may ultimately see "hundreds of thousands of cases."

What the editorials said

The virus has unleashed a "political maelstrom" that threatens Chinese President Xi Jinping, said the ***Financial Times***. In an unprecedented display of defiance, ordinary Chinese have vented their anger online over the government's mismanagement of the crisis, silencing of whistleblowers, and willingness to lie "to its citizens to save face." Beijing's authoritarian might and ability to marshal resources on a vast scale have lifted millions of its citizens out of poverty. But as wealth grows, people "thirst not only for material well-being but also for dignity."

We face "many huge unknowns" about the virus, said ***The Guardian*** (U.K.). We don't know how long it lingers on a contaminated surface, for example, or how infectious people are before showing symptoms of the disease. But uncertainty is no excuse for inaction. Now is the time to take measures to head off "pandemics that could catch us off guard in the future." We could start by improving health services in poor areas of Asia and Africa. "Outbreaks of deadly new diseases—wherever they emerge—are not someone else's problem."

What the columnists said

If a coronavirus epidemic hits the U.S., it "could bring out the worst in President Trump," said **Peter Nicholas** in ***TheAtlantic.com.*** Having already stoked fears about disease-bearing foreigners, he would likely "double down on xenophobic suspicions" during an outbreak. He'll need a sturdy bureaucracy to stop the virus' spread, but over the past three years he's "hollowed out federal agencies and belittled expertise." Should a pandemic land on our shores, we'll learn the hard way that "tweets don't beget vaccines."

To know if we are facing a pandemic "we need answers to two basic questions," said **Julia Belluz** in ***Vox.com.*** How deadly is the virus, and how easily does it spread? Studies suggest a "reproduction number"—how many people a sick person is likely to infect—between 2 and 3.11. That's higher than the flu or SARS. But figures from China indicate the virus' mortality rate is about 2.3 percent; that's far below SARS' 10 percent mortality rate. Still, at this early stage these numbers are just "informed guesses."

"However much we'd like to know everything right now, we just don't," said **John Allen Paulos** in ***The New York Times.*** Accurate infection counts are notoriously tricky; people who experience the virus as a mild cold, for example, won't go to the doctor. Fatality rates can also be hard to determine—the virus might be blamed for the deaths of vulnerable people suffering from serious conditions such as diabetes. We have to "accept the discomfort" of our uncertainty. "Which is all the more reason to abide by one of the things we do know at this point: You should wash your hands regularly."

It wasn't all bad

■ Acia Williams owes a lot to Chet Bennett. He ran the Washington, D.C., beauty college where Williams began her career two decades ago and has been a mentor and friend ever since. So when Williams discovered that Bennett needed a new kidney, she knew she had to find out if she was a match. She was, and the pair underwent transplant surgery. Bennett is now back to full health, and to say thank you, he donated something to Williams: the beauty store she'd managed for him for years. "He's always been a giver," said Williams.

■ When Lloyd Black joined his local gym a year ago, a 10-minute walk on the treadmill would tire him out. That was nothing to be ashamed of: Black was 90 years old and an exercise novice. But determined to improve his health, Black diligently showed up at Anytime Fitness in Semmes, Ala., three times a week. He can now speed through a half-hour of power walking and lift weights. Black works out in dungarees—"I can't keep my pants up!" he says—and happily teaches other seniors how to use the exercise machines. Recently named gym member of the month, Black has some simple advice for anyone who wants to get fit: "Go ahead—get started."

Black in his workout gear

■ Flying with a baby can be a nightmare, but for Dustin and Caren Moore, it led to an unexpected shower of kindness. The couple were flying home from Colorado to California with their newly adopted 8-day-old daughter when a curious flight attendant asked about their baby. He used the in-flight intercom to announce the "very special guest" and passed out napkins and pens; 60 passengers then wrote messages of encouragement and advice for the new parents. "For an entire crew of strangers to come together like that to show us that kind of love and kindness meant everything to us," said Dustin.

Reuters, Ashley Seaman/Anytime Fitness

Controversy of the week

Sanders: Can he win broad support?

BernieSanders.com
Bernie

The new front-runner

Bernie Sanders may now be the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, said **Dylan Scott** in *Vox.com*, but anxious moderates are deeply worried that his signature policy, "Medicare for all," is "a political albatross." Last week the powerful Culinary Workers Union of Nevada distributed flyers urging its 60,000 members to oppose Medicare for all when participating in the Feb. 22 caucus, because it would terminate the generous, employer-provided health care plan they'd won through labor negotiations. The Culinary Workers' opposition hints at a bigger problem for Sanders' campaign. While Medicare for all polls well (56 percent) in the abstract, support plummets to 37 percent when voters are told it means the end of the private insurance on which 180 million Americans currently depend. Some of Sanders' supporters seem to recognize the danger, said **Joseph Zeballos-Roig** in *BusinessInsider.com*. His "key surrogate," New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, said that people shouldn't let Medicare for all keep them from supporting Sanders, because Congress won't pass such a sweeping reform anyway. By putting single-payer on the table, she said, Sanders can get "a public option"—that is, Medicare for those who want it—as a compromise.

But are Sanders' supporters willing to settle for a compromise? asked **Jennifer Medina** and **Jonathan Martin** in *The New York Times*. After Culinary Workers distributed its flyers, Culinary's secretary-treasurer says, she was inundated with hundreds of abusive texts and phone calls, with Sanders supporters calling union leaders "bitches" and "evil, entitled a--holes." Sanders has made "rhetorical overtures toward civility," said **Noah Rothman** in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. But he has surrounded himself with people who viciously attack anyone who opposes him. They are scaring away those voters less interested in "revolution" than in finding someone, anyone, who can beat Donald Trump.

Sanders could certainly use some "messaging adjustments," said **Eric Levitz** in *NYMag.com*. Though he won New Hampshire, his "margins of victory in the popular vote were meager." The Vermont senator's "professed game plan" to turn out droves of young and disaffected first-time voters hasn't panned out: Turnout among under-30 voters in both Iowa and New Hampshire "was unremarkable." Sanders needs to broaden his appeal to his fellow seniors, who fear that Medicare expansion will dilute their own benefits; he needs to remind them that he alone has a plan for "universal long-term care and increasing Social Security benefits." To broaden his appeal to other Democrats, Sanders should more frequently engage in "personal narrative" about how he was shaped by growing up in a lower-middle-class Jewish family deeply impacted by the Holocaust. Sanders is best when he makes sincere, "Obama-esque appeals to Americans' common humanity." More of that, please.

Sanders may not admit it, said **Paul Waldman** in *The Washington Post*, but he's more of "a pragmatist" than either his critics or superfans realize. As AOC pointed out, Sanders' "extreme" policies can serve as negotiating positions from which he can compromise to achieve less radical but still valuable reforms. Giving all Americans the option to enroll in Medicare, for example, "could be a much more dramatic reform" than the Affordable Care Act—and serve as "a way station on the road to single-payer." So why doesn't Sanders just admit that? Unlike some of his more "electable" rivals, Sanders knows you don't "compromise with yourself before negotiations begin."

Only in America

■ A Florida man says his kidney dialysis center is violating his freedom of speech because it won't let him bring a life-size cardboard cutout of President Trump with him for emotional support. Nelson Gibson says the cardboard Trump helps him feel "comfortable" during 3.5-hour dialysis treatments, but that the medical staff told him "it wasn't a rally" and that the cutout was too large. Gibson says that's discrimination.

■ Idaho is seeing an influx of "vaccine refugees" from California, which now requires virtually all schoolchildren to be immunized. Idaho lets parents exempt their children from vaccinations purely on the basis of "personal belief." One refugee, Lou Munilla, told Idaho lawmakers he moved to the state because "I don't care about the herd, I care about my family."

Good week for:

Earthlings, after an asteroid larger than the tallest building on Earth whizzed by the planet at a distance of 3.6 million miles. A direct hit would have killed millions immediately, says NASA, and triggered a yearslong "nuclear winter" and "mass extinctions."

Putrefaction, after Burger King launched a new ad showing a Whopper rotting and growing mold over 34 days, to show "the beauty of no artificial preservatives." *Adweek*'s David Griner called it "one of the boldest, most bizarre ad campaigns I've ever seen."

Florida's lobster lovers, for whom the price of local spiny lobster has plunged because coronavirus-related travel restrictions have cut off air shipments to the lucrative Chinese market. "For the next month or so," said restaurateur Steve Gyland of North Palm Beach, "we can enjoy lobster for a reasonable price."

Bad week for:

Covid Inc., an Arizona-based manufacturer of audiovisual cables, after the World Health Organization named the coronavirus "Covid-19." Covid CEO Norm Carson called the coincidence "surreal" and "unfortunate."

Romance, with the announcement by Jeff Gebhart, 47, of Kansas City that he'll pay $25,000 to anyone who can find him a girlfriend who'll date him exclusively for a year. Women who are recommended must take a survey "based on science," Gebhart said.

Winter, with the opening in Norway—Norway!—of Sno, an indoor skiing center featuring artificial snow and painted backdrops of Scandinavian forests. "The winters are varying a bit more than one would wish," explained director Morten Dybdahl.

Federal laws waived for border wall

The Trump administration said this week that it will waive federal contracting laws to fast-track construction of 177 miles of border fencing in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. The government has already used waivers to sidestep environmental impact reviews for fence construction. But in a first, the Department of Homeland Security will now waive 10 procurement laws, including a requirement to hold open competition for contracts and give losing bidders the chance to appeal. "It's equivalent to buying a car without seeing a sticker price," said Scott Amey, general counsel of the Project on Government Oversight. The White House expects 94 miles of barriers to be built this year, bringing Trump closer to his goal of erecting 450 miles of wall on the Mexican border.

AP

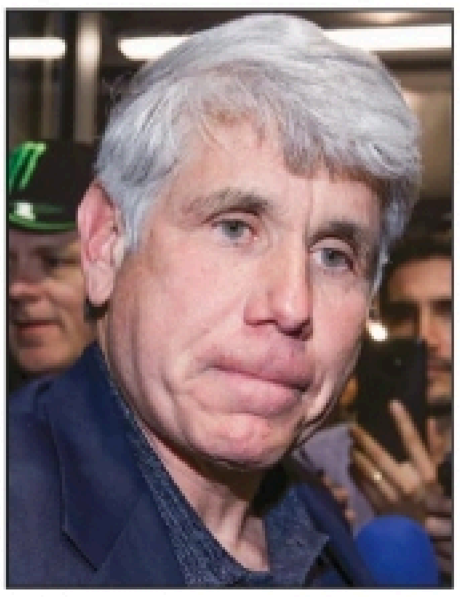
The U.S. at a glance…

Seattle

Delivery for climate activists

Prime giving: Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos pledged $10 billion this week to create a fund to fight climate change, the biggest act of philanthropy to date by the world's richest man. The Bezos Earth Fund will start awarding grants this summer, he said, to scientists, activists, and organizations that are trying to combat "the biggest threat to our planet." The climate pledge amounts to less than 8 percent of Bezos' $130 billion estimated worth but ranks as the third-largest charitable gift ever. Bezos has faced intense pressure from employees to make Amazon greener; the company emits 44.4 million metric tons of carbon a year, more than most countries. "We applaud Jeff Bezos' philanthropy," Amazon Employees for Climate Justice said, "but one hand cannot give what the other is taking away."

Washington, D.C.



Blagojevich: 'Trumpocrat'

Clemency spree: President Trump granted clemency to a string of notorious white-collar criminals this week, following recommendations from GOP donors, friends, and Fox News hosts. Among the 11 people granted pardons or sentence commutations were former Illinois Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who was serving 14 years in prison for attempting to sell President Barack Obama's former Senate seat, and Michael Milken, the so-called junk bond king of the 1980s. The president said he pardoned Blagojevich, a former *Celebrity Apprentice* contestant and self-described "Trumpocrat," after seeing his wife, Patti, on Fox News pleading for Trump's intervention. Blagojevich was also convicted of extorting campaign donations from the CEO of a children's hospital. Clemency was granted to former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik, a frequent Fox News contributor convicted in 2009 of tax fraud and lying to investigators, and Edward DeBartolo Jr., the San Francisco 49ers owner who transferred the team to his sister in 1997 after pleading guilty to bribing Louisiana's governor in exchange for a gambling license. Another pardon went to Paul Pogue, a construction executive who pleaded guilty to dodging $473,000 in taxes. Last fall, Pogue's son and daughter-in-law gave $200,000 to the Trump Victory Committee and posted a photo online of themselves posing with Donald Trump Jr. The Department of Justice traditionally vets and recommends pardons and commutations; there's no indication that Trump followed that process. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat, said Trump's clemency blitz was intended "to reward his friends and condone corruption."

Irving, Texas

Tarnished image

Bankruptcy for Boy Scouts: Facing a flood of sexual abuse lawsuits, the Boy Scouts of America filed for bankruptcy this week in a bid to limit the financial damage to the 110-year-old organization. Over the past decade, lawsuits and investigations have revealed how generations of boys were preyed on by abusive troop leaders. By the Scouts' own reckoning, more than 12,000 children were abused by some 7,800 former leaders from 1946 through 2016. The Boy Scouts estimates that up to 5,000 victims will seek compensation; bankruptcy allows the group to temporarily freeze those cases and keep operating. The organization could be forced to sell some of its many property holdings, including campgrounds and hiking trails, to create a victims' fund that could top $1 billion.

Getty (2), Reuters

Albany, N.Y.

Quid pro quo? President Trump suggested last week that if New York wants to have its access to federal trusted-traveler programs reinstated, his former home state should drop lawsuits and investigations into his administration as well as his businesses and finances. The Department of Homeland Security announced earlier this month that it was halting New Yorkers' access to Global Entry and other programs that expedite airport clearance for preapproved travelers because of the state's Green Light Law, which allows undocumented immigrants to get driver's licenses. But just hours before a meeting last week to discuss the block with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Trump tweeted that "New York must stop all of its unnecessary lawsuits & harrassment [sic]" and "build relationships." State Attorney General Letitia James has issued subpoenas for Trump's financial records and is pursuing multiple investigations into the Trump Organization.

New York City

Shakedown artist

Avenatti guilty: Michael Avenatti, the brash attorney who became a cable news fixture while representing President Trump's alleged mistress Stormy Daniels, was found guilty last week of trying to extort $25 million from Nike. Prosecutors said Avenatti was in "crushing debt" when he began representing a youth basketball coach who alleged that Nike was making illegal payments to high school athletes. Avenatti, 49, threatened to reveal the payments unless his client received $1.5 million and he and one other lawyer got $12 million. In a recorded call last March, Avenatti also demanded $25 million from Nike to conduct an internal probe into illegal dealings with amateur athletes. He could be sentenced to up to 42 years in prison. Avenatti also faces separate fraud charges in California and additional charges in New York for allegedly defrauding Daniels. The porn star said her reaction to Avenatti's conviction was, "High five!"

The world at a glance...

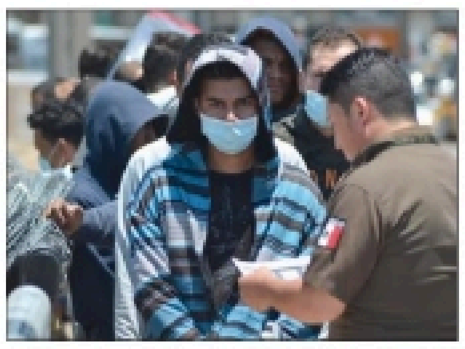
Underwater in Wales

Pontypridd, U.K.

Devastating deluge: Floods and landslides killed at least three people in the U.K. this week after Storm Dennis dumped 6 inches of rain in two days, causing rivers to burst their banks across Wales and England. In the Welsh town of Pontypridd, hundreds of families had to evacuate. "Homes have been completely destroyed, even those with floodgates," said Alex Davies-Jones, the area's member of Parliament. Further north, the River Wye reached its highest level on record, causing overflows that swept away cars and inundated villages. Across the country, a record 515 flood warnings were issued, including five for life-threatening floods. Storm Dennis hit the U.K. only a week after Storm Ciara battered the country, swamping some 800 properties in England alone.

Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

Migrants are easy prey: A staggering number of migrants waiting in Mexico for their U.S. asylum hearings are being abducted and brutalized, according to a Doctors Without Borders report. In an attempt to reduce asylum claims, the Trump administration in 2019 changed U.S. policy to require non-Mexican migrants to wait in Mexico for their immigration court hearings. Some 57,000 people have had to wait for months south of the border. Of those migrants waiting in the border city of Nuevo Laredo, the report says, 75 percent have been abducted for ransom by criminal groups, and 45 percent have suffered violence or rape. "It's become big business," said local pastor Diego Robles. "It's a way for the drug cartels to diversify."



Waiting in Mexico

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Deadly fire at children's home: At least 17 children and babies died last week in a fire at a Haitian children's home run by an American church. The group home was operated by the Pennsylvania-based Church of Bible Understanding, an organization that lost accreditation for its facilities in Haiti in 2012 after inspections revealed overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. But the church continued to operate two homes in the country; Associated Press reporters visited one in 2013 and found that children were housed in rooms that were dirty and dark. Tax records for 2017, the most recent year available, show that the nonprofit reported revenue of $6.6 million and expenses of $2.2 million. Of the roughly 750 children's homes in Haiti, which together shelter more than 25,000 poor children, only 35 meet UNICEF standards.

Brasília

Cuban doctors rehired: The Brazilian government is preparing to rehire hundreds of Cuban doctors who were sacked in 2018 after the incoming administration of President Jair Bolsonaro said it would end the exchange program. In his election campaign, the far-right Bolsonaro complained that Cuba's Communist government was pocketing most of the doctors' salaries, and claimed that the medics—who mostly worked in remote, impoverished areas—were forming guerrilla cells. But the Brazilian doctors brought in as replacements have been quitting at high rates, and the shortage of medical care has grown so acute that the government is now bringing back some of the 1,800 Cuban doctors who haven't yet returned to Cuba.

A Cuban medic: Needed again

Assange

London

Pardon for Assange? Wikileaks founder Julian Assange claims that President Trump offered to pardon him if he would say that Russia was not involved in hacking the Democrats in 2016. Assange's lawyers told a British court this week that Dana Rohrabacher, a pro-Russia former GOP congressman, visited Assange in 2017 to bring him the offer. The judge ruled the allegation will be admissible in Assange's extradition trial next week. Assange argues he should not be extradited to the U.S. because the case against him is political, not criminal. He is facing 18 charges under the Espionage Act. U.S. intelligence has concluded that Russian hackers penetrated the servers of the Democratic National Committee and gave thousands of emails to WikiLeaks, which posted them online.

Berlin

Plot against Muslims: German police announced last week that they had foiled a far-right terrorist plot to stage simultaneous mass-casualty attacks on mosques, politicians, and asylum-seekers. In raids across the country, police arrested 12 men—including one of their own officers who'd been suspended for suspected neo-Nazi links. "It's shocking what has been revealed here," said Interior Ministry spokesman Björn Grünewälder. "There are cells here that appear to have become radicalized in such a short span of time." The suspects had a stockpile of weapons that included guns, grenades, crossbows, and even spiked maces. Muslim groups have asked for police protection at mosques. "We should not have to use private security companies to protect our congregations," said Aiman Mazyek, chair of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany.

Newscom, Reuters, AP, Getty

The world at a glance...

Kazan, Russia

Tatar school books

Curbing Tatar rights: Schools in the Russian province of Tatarstan have been ordered to cut the number of hours they can teach the Tatar language from four a week down to two, part of President Vladimir Putin's drive to stamp out ethnic separatism. Russia's 5 million Tatars, mostly Muslims who speak a Turkic language, are the country's largest minority. Two years ago, the Kremlin stripped provinces of their right to mandate local-language instruction, and thousands of Tatar-language teachers were fired. Now, say parents in Tatarstan, it is nearly impossible to teach their children in their mother tongue, and Tatar unrest is growing. Last year, activists abroad called on Tatars to refuse to serve in the Russian military. "Putin's actions will lead to the opposite of what he wants," said Farit Zakiev, leader of the All-Tatar Public Center.

Nairobi, Kenya

Donating blood in Nairobi

Blood shortage: Kenya is facing a dire shortage of blood supplies in hospitals, months after the Trump administration slashed the budget for fighting AIDS abroad. Kenyan blood drives were funded by money from the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a program started by President George W. Bush. U.S. spending on the blood transfusion service in Kenya has sunk over the past decade from a high of $6 million a year to $1.4 million last year. American officials said the Kenyan government had advance warning of the cuts but failed to allocate any funding for transfusion drives in its 2020 budget. Kenyans needing transfusions for themselves or their children have resorted to begging for blood on social media. "Blood is like a parachute," said Joseph Wangendo of Kenya's Bloodlink Foundation. "If a doctor prescribes it and it's not there, you will likely die."

AP, Reuters (3)

Idlib, Syria

Escaping the fighting

Families freeze: Hundreds of thousands of people are fleeing their homes in Idlib, Syria's last rebel-held province, to evade a showdown between Turkish troops and Syrian regime forces backed by Russia. The Syrian government launched an offensive in Idlib late last year, and 13 Turkish troops stationed at observation posts there have been killed by Syrian fire in recent weeks. Now, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan—who has backed the rebels—has threatened to attack the Assad regime unless its forces leave the province. Displaced civilians have few places to seek safety, because refugee camps near the Turkish border are already overcrowded. Many are sleeping in open fields in freezing conditions. "The situation in the northwest is untenable, even by Syria's grim standards," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF's executive director.

Beijing

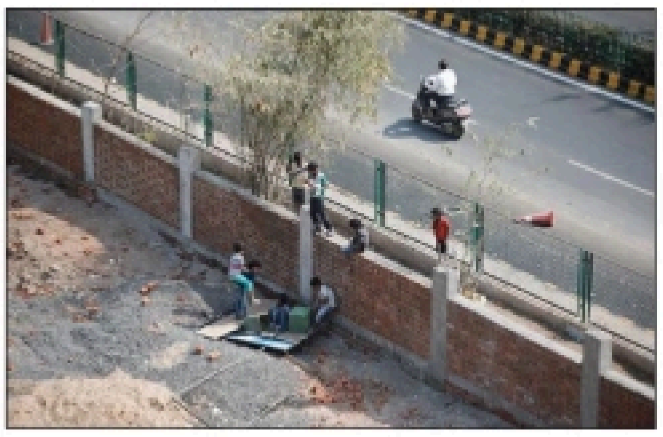
Reporters banished: China has taken the extraordinary step of expelling three *Wall Street Journal* reporters—two Americans and an Australian—in a pique over an op-ed critical of its economy. The Feb. 3 op-ed by Walter Russell Mead, headlined "China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia," argued that China was heading for an economic crisis caused by massive corruption, industrial overcapacity, and a property bubble. China's Foreign Ministry called the piece "racist." The three reporters, the first to be expelled from China in more than 20 years, work for the news side of the paper, which is entirely separate from the opinion pages. Meanwhile, the U.S. said this week that it would treat the American operations of five Chinese state-run news organizations as foreign missions, saying they were effectively arms of the Chinese government.

Kabul

Peace deal? Afghan and American officials voiced cautious optimism this week after the Taliban, Afghan government, and U.S. government all agreed to a weeklong cease-fire in preparation for comprehensive peace talks. "We are going to suspend a significant part of our operations," said Defense Secretary Mark Esper. If all goes according to plan, he said, the U.S. will reduce its troops in the country from 12,000 to 8,600. Significant stumbling blocks remain: The Taliban still refuses to recognize the Afghan government, as do many Afghans. After five months of delay, the Afghan election commission announced this week that President Ashraf Ghani had narrowly won a second term in the September election, but his opponent, Abdullah Abdullah, rejected the outcome and vowed to form a parallel government.

Ahmedabad, India

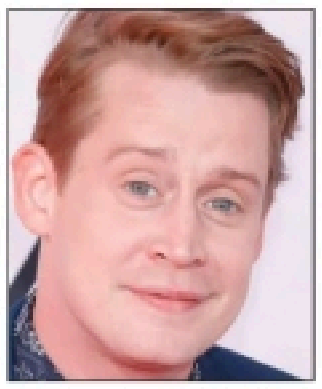
A wall for Trump: Indian authorities have erected a four-foot wall that stretches for a quarter-mile to block President Trump's view of a slum when he visits the city of Ahmedabad next week. Trump will be in Ahmedabad to attend a "Namaste, Trump" rally that is India's answer to the "Howdy, Modi" event held in Texas last year for Indian President Narendra Modi. Trump will drive along a road next to the slum, home to more than 2,000 people, when he heads to the rally. At least 45 families who live in tents along the presidential motorcade route have been handed eviction notices. "We have been living here for 20 years," said resident Sanjay Patani. "This is injustice." Authorities say the wall was built "for security reasons."



Blocking the slum from view

People

Culkin at peace, at last



Macaulay Culkin has finally recovered from his acting career, said Ryan D'Agostino in *Esquire*. He still appears in a movie once every few years, but he mostly works on his humor website. "People assume that I'm crazy, or a kook, or damaged," says Culkin, 39. "Everybody, stop acting so freaking shocked that I'm relatively well adjusted." After Culkin starred in the blockbuster *Home Alone* at 10, his stage father saw dollar signs and pushed him to make as many films as possible. When his parents split, Culkin removed their names from his trust fund to protect his $20 million in reported earnings. "It coulda been worse," he says. "I wasn't working in a coal mine. I wasn't a child soldier. My father was not sexually abusing me." For a while, though, he did seem unwell, growing alarmingly thin, touring with a parody cover band, and gleefully using hard drugs. Lately he's more interested in hanging out with his cats, dog, fish, and parrot and his partner, former child actor Brenda Song. "It took me a long time to get to that place," he says. "I had to go, 'Honestly, Mack? It's not so bad.' I want for nothing and need for even less. I'm good."

Why Hockney keeps drawing

David Hockney still rises at dawn to draw, said Kirsty Lang in *The Times* (U.K.). At 82, if the longtime Los Angeles dweller isn't eating or sleeping, he is probably drawing—a habit he developed at Bradford School of Art in England. "It was open at 9 in the morning until 9 at night, so from the age of 16 to 20, I drew 12 hours a day," he says. His preferred medium keeps changing, moving from pens and colored pencil in the 1960s and '70s to his more recent experiments with watercolor and with digital technology, in which he creates his signature vibrant images on his iPad. Though forever associated with L.A. swimming pools—his painting of his onetime partner in the pool sold at auction for $90.3 million in 2018, then a record for a living artist—Hockney is transfixed by the seasons and draws them at scale. (His winter landscape of East Yorkshire measures 40 feet, a jigsaw of 50 canvases.) "I set out to draw the world about me," he says. "The world doesn't really look like photographs. You have to draw it." Cameras, he explains, are especially bad at capturing nature. "When they shot *Singin' in the Rain*, they had to put milk in the water for the camera to see it," Hockney says. "I'm with Edvard Munch, who said photography can't compete with painting, because it can't deal with heaven or hell."

How Eilish developed her look

Billie Eilish is not a traditional pop star, said Rob Haskell in *Vogue*. The 18-year-old is known for her shapeless wardrobe and her dark, whispered lyrics, which made her the first woman to net all four big awards at this year's Grammys. Her fans see the awkward, angsty teenager they actually resemble, not one they wish they did. But Eilish says she's not rebelling—she's just being herself. "What rule did I break?" she asks. "The rule about making class pop music and dressing like a girly girl? I never said I'm not going to do that. I just didn't do it." She began dressing in oversize outfits to obscure her figure as a home-schooled child in East Los Angeles who would fashion shirts from Ikea shopping bags. "At 9 or 10, my style was unbelievably terrible," she says, "but it was exactly what I wanted to wear. I was chubby and short. I had boobs at 9. I got my period at 11. All of a sudden, you look down and you're like, 'Whoa, what can I do to make this go away?'" The look she developed—which includes slime-green hair—isn't a branding gimmick, she insists. "People see me as a rule breaker because they themselves feel like they have to follow rules. I never realized that I was expected to."

In the news

■ White House senior adviser **Stephen Miller** married **Katie Waldman,** Vice President Pence's press secretary, this week at Trump International Hotel in Washington. Miller, 34, writes many of President Trump's speeches and is the driving force behind hard-line immigration policies such as forced family separation at the border, which Waldman, 28, defended in her previous job as Department of Homeland Security spokesperson. One of Trump's longest-tenured and most trusted aides, Miller came under fire from Democrats recently when emails he wrote to a *Breitbart* reporter showed him pushing white-nationalist talking points. Trump raced back from the Daytona 500 in Florida to attend the wedding. Miller, Trump quipped during his toast, "is the only one who could have a damn wedding in the middle of Presidents Day weekend."

■ Disgraced former Rep. **Anthony Weiner** (D-N.Y.) is facing strong opposition from parents at his son's Manhattan school who don't want the registered sex offender allowed on school grounds, the *New York Post* reported this week. Weiner, 55, wants to be able to pick up his son, Jordan, 8, from school and attend parent-teacher conferences. "Parents are very upset," a source told the tabloid, explaining that some students are the same age as the 15-year-old North Carolina girl with whom Weiner had a sexting relationship in 2016. Weiner, the estranged husband of Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin, served 21 months in prison after pleading guilty to sending the girl "adult pornography."

■ Retired NBA star **Dwyane Wade** and his wife, **Gabrielle Union**, last week publicly introduced the world to their 12-year-old transgender daughter, Zaya. Wade recounted on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* how his child, born Zion, came home one day and said, "I think going forward I am ready to live my truth. I want to be referenced as 'she' and 'her.'" Last Thanksgiving, Wade responded to social media trolls who mocked a family photo that showed Zaya wearing acrylic nails and a crop top. Union echoed support for her stepdaughter in a video, saying, "It's OK to listen to, love, and respect your children exactly as they are."

Getty, Newscom, AP

Scam PACs

Con men are using political action committees to bilk donors of tens of millions of dollars.

NOW HIRING/
Apply Within
$10/Hour vs Commission

A strip mall office for Politicause in Alabama

Reuters

What are 'scam PACs'?

They are political action committees that claim to raise money for a candidate or good cause but spend little or none of the donated funds for those purposes. People running scam PACs either pocket the money outright in the form of salaries and perks or, more subtly, funnel the donations to a network of companies (consultants, marketers, fundraisers) in which the PAC's managers have a stake. These phony PACs have noble-sounding names like Coalition for American Veterans or For a Better America, and pretend to support good causes like firefighters, veterans, and disease victims. Some claim to support political candidates such as President Trump ("Trump Victory") or Sen. Bernie Sanders. Typically, however, 80 to 90 percent of the money raised is spent on "overhead," and in egregious cases as much as 99 percent. "The money primarily goes to the people who are running the PAC," said Brett Kappel, campaign finance specialist at Akerman LLP.

Why do they get away with it?

Charities are policed by state authorities, but scam PACs are not covered by these laws and regulations. They register as political organizations, and thus enjoy considerable legal protection for their activities. In fact, said Adav Noti, a former Federal Election Commission lawyer, federal and state authorities have largely said they can't prosecute scam PACs that don't conceal where the money went or engage in other outright lies. PAC operators can always claim it "costs money to raise money," Noti said. "It's hard to bring cases unless you have evidence disproving that." That gives scam PACs a relatively free hand. "I had breast cancer, so they knew how to get me," said JoAnn Coleman, 63, a donor to a PAC called Americans for the Cure of Breast Cancer, which took in $1.6 million in donations over two and a half years and made exactly one $10,000 contribution for research over that period. "What a racket," said Coleman.

How do they operate?

Most scam PACs hire telemarketing firms to contact would-be donors; these telemarketers often target retirees for the scripted calls. A recent Reuters investigation found that the fundraisers often operate out of nondescript strip mall offices in states like New Jersey, Alabama, Florida, and Nevada. These telemarketing firms often operate under multiple names, shut down, and then reemerge under new names. Alexander Lefler, who worked for one such firm, called TPFE Inc., in Alabama, said he'd been instructed to pitch whatever cause he was hawking "like it was a charity, but as quietly and quickly as you can, slip in that it was a PAC." Jason Jones, who made calls for a firm called Politicause, said, "You are not lying, but you are being extremely misleading." In one instance, Jones told Reuters, a person he called asked how much of the money would actually go to the charity. "We are proud to say it's a 90-10 split," Jones remembers reading from a script; he neglected to explain that it was his company that would be keeping the 90 percent. "We wish it was 100," he told the potential donor, "but we have to keep the lights on."

How many are there?

There are dozens of scam PACs popping in and out of existence, and they raise a lot of money. Kyle Prall of Austin was recently sentenced to three years in prison for raising $548,428 for several PACs, including "Feel Bern" and "Trump Victory," while donating a total of less than $5,100 to the candidates. He made the mistake of making explicit claims to donors about how the money would be used, while spending it instead on exotic vacations, lap dances, deep-tissue massage, and even a pet-cleaning fee. In December, *Politico.com* reported that almost 20 "unofficial" pro-Trump PACs had legally siphoned off $46.7 million in donations during the two and a half years from his inauguration to mid-2019. One, Great America PAC, paid almost $1 million to a public affairs firm registered to the PAC's co-chairman. "There's nothing we can do to stop them," said Kelly Sadler, a spokeswoman for America First, the one super PAC sanctioned by Trump. "This is a problem for the campaign, as well as us, as well as for the RNC."

Who else has been targeted?

One California con man focused exclusively on Democrats and progressive causes, leveraging a network of PACs to purportedly raise more than $250,000 for Bernie Sanders, Beto O'Rourke, and "immigrant children." One now-convicted swindler, Cary Lee Peterson of Phoenix, raised $90,000 for his pro-Sanders PAC "Americans Socially United," including a $47,300 donation from James Bond actor Daniel Craig, but spent virtually nothing to help Sanders. Still, successful prosecutions remain rare. Last year, a U.S. district judge struck down FEC rules barring unauthorized PACs from using a candidate's name. FEC Chair Ellen Weintraub said the ruling would "lead to confusion in the political marketplace" and "a wide opening for scam PACs to exploit."

The first federal prosecution

The Justice Department is finally taking notice of scam PACs. Last year, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman announced the department's first successful case against a "scam PAC" artist. William Tierney of Arizona pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit wire fraud after duping tens of thousands of donors into contributing more than $23 million to six PACs he founded, controlled, and operated. Less than 1 percent of the money raised ever made it to the causes he claimed to champion, including autism awareness, the pro-life movement, and law enforcement. Tierney, who admitted setting up shell companies and fake identities to conceal where the money went and falsely claiming how it was spent, was sentenced to two years in prison and ordered to pay $1.17 million in restitution. Brett Kappel, the Washington, D.C., campaign finance law expert, called it "a very significant" prosecution that "sends a powerful message that consumer protection laws apply to political fundraising." After Tierney's plea, Berman warned, "This is the first-ever federal prosecution of fraudulent scam PACs, but it won't be the last."

Best columns: The U.S.

Full disclosure is no longer required

John Harris
Politico.com

After Sen. Bernie Sanders suffered a heart attack, he promised to release "comprehensive" medical records. But when he was recently asked on *Meet the Press* when the public would see those records, said John Harris, the 78-year-old Sanders said, in effect, "Go to hell." Sanders' response—once you release medical records, he said amid a cloud of obfuscation, "it never ends"—demonstrates how President Trump has transformed the relationship between the press and public officials. For decades, candidates have faced strong pressure to disclose information about their health, their tax returns, and even their personal behavior. Refusing to comply with this transparency norm "came with a high cost," as major networks and newspapers would call out candidates for evasiveness. But in the Trump era, a "seismic shift" has occurred. Trump has gotten away with his refusal to release tax returns, respond to subpoenas, or answer reporters' questions, and the news media has lost much of its power "to set the agenda and enforce minimum standards of public conduct." If Sanders can get away with running for president without telling voters about the extent of his heart disease, he can thank the man in the Oval Office.

The folly of compulsory voting

Jeff Jacoby
The Boston Globe

"Should it be illegal to sit out an election?" asked Jeff Jacoby. That may sound like a kooky question, but Massachusetts State Rep. Dylan Fernandes has introduced a bill that would require state residents to vote in every election or be fined. Other liberals, including former President Barack Obama, have also called for compulsory voting to boost public participation. In the 10 or so countries that have compulsory voting, the prospect of fines and other punishments does raise voting rates. But does forcing people to vote really enhance democracy? Our country is based on individual rights and "personal autonomy," and Americans are free to believe in God, own a weapon, and engage in political activity—and just as free not do those things. Voting is a right, not a duty. People who ignore elections generally say they aren't interested in politics, don't know much about the candidates, and believe their vote "won't matter anyway." It may sound blasphemous to people who "worship at the altar of voter turnout," but not voting is a legitimate choice that we should protect, not punish. "A ballot marked under duress is a vote not for democracy, but against it."

The likability trap for women

Monica Hesse
The Washington Post

After Sen. Amy Klobuchar's strong third-place finish in Iowa, said Monica Hesse, many Democrats wondered if "maybe a woman did have a shot at winning the election, after all." Klobuchar is a savvy Midwestern moderate who has "the right mix of tough and empathetic." But Democrats should "remember this feeling of liking her," because something funny happens when women become serious candidates for the presidency. In 2016, Hillary Clinton entered the presidential race with a 65 percent approval rating. But then people began saying she was "too shrill, too conniving." And "ugh, her voice." A similar phenomenon occurred to highly popular Democrats Sen. Kamala Harris and Sen. Elizabeth Warren in the 2020 race; both suddenly were deemed shrill, inauthentic, and "deeply flawed." Multiple studies have shown that "likability is optional for male candidates" but "is a requirement for female candidates"—especially for those who run for president. Voters often decide that forceful, ambitious women are "lecturing" them and remind them of their mother-in-law or ex-wife. If Klobuchar's rise leads to her being called unlikable and unpresidential, "it will have everything to do with her being a woman."

Viewpoint

"Trump has transformed much of the GOP in his image. Too weak to protect their own brand, the Republicans have adopted his. If either Sanders or Bloomberg wins the nomination, it will be interesting to see if the same thing happens to Democrats. If it's Sanders, will they become a populist party of Social Democrats? Or if it's Bloomberg, will the Democrats become the party of bureaucratic authoritarianism? There are, of course, still other options for primary voters. But the choice between these two is zero-sum, and if either man wins, the Democratic Party could end up making a choice that will define it as much as Trump has come to define the GOP."

Jonah Goldberg in the Los Angeles Times

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A Chinese marathoner overcame a government coronavirus quarantine by running 31 miles in his small apartment. Pan Shancu needed 6,250 laps around a 26-foot course he'd arranged in a single room in order to cover the distance. His time, he noted, was 4 hours, 48 minutes, and 44 seconds. "I have not been outside for many days, but today I could not bear sitting around anymore," he said of the restrictions authorities have imposed because of the epidemic. "I am sweating all over, feels great!"

■ A water-skiing squirrel has become the focus of a legal battle in Vancouver, B.C. Twiggy is delighting fans by performing at the Vancouver International Boat Show on tiny water skis, wearing a hand-sewn life preserver, but city officials have told the show it is violating an obscure law that prohibits the use of rodents "in competitions, exhibitions, performances, or events." Twiggy, however, continues to perform in violation of the city order. In defending his use, a spokeswoman for the boat show said that Twiggy's act is "educational" and helps kids learn about "life jacket safety."

■ The owners of a beloved beagle that had gone missing for days were startled when they heard the dog's disembodied bark coming from under the ground. The puzzled Virginia family called animal control officers. They deduced that Henry had chased a rabbit or other animal into a hole in the yard that led to an old, abandoned vehicle buried upside down in the dirt. Several rescuers had to use tools to unearth the car and free Henry. "Happy to say Henry is fine!" a statement from the animal control shelter said.

AP

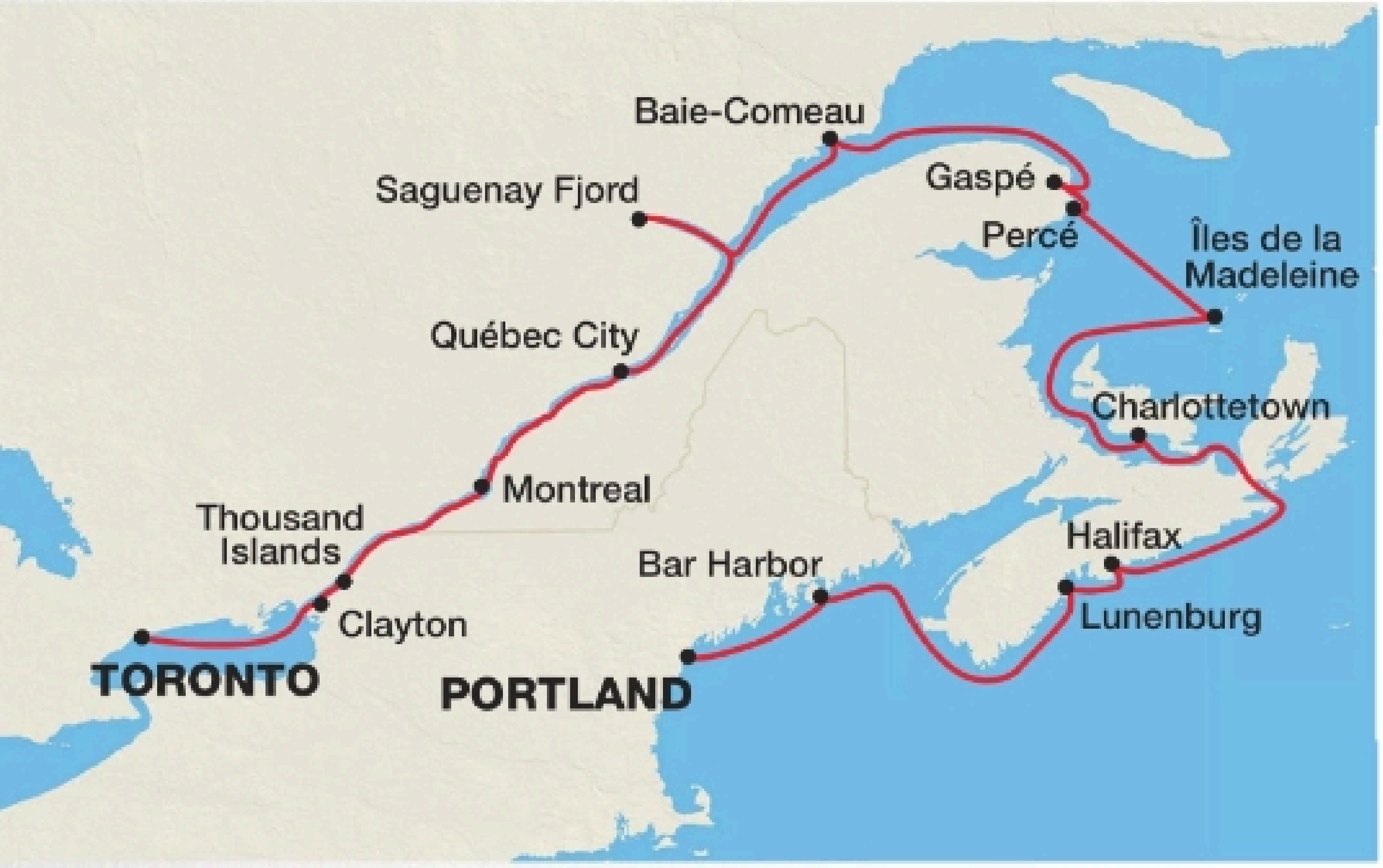
Pearl Seas Cruises®

Call for a Free Cruise Guide!

Cruise The Canadian Maritimes & St. Lawrence Seaway

Experience the intimate atmosphere and sophisticated comfort of small ship cruising with Pearl Seas. During your 14-night cruise, you will have exclusive access to Canada's most majestic destinations, diverse cultures, and breathtaking scenery. Enjoy award-winning excursions that will fill your days with exploration and discovery.

Explore Well™


Baie-Comeau
Saguenay Fjord
Gaspé
Percé
Îles de la Madeleine
Québec City
Charlottetown
Montreal
Thousand Islands
Halifax
Bar Harbor
Clayton
Lunenburg
TORONTO
PORTLAND

Call for a **FREE** Cruise Guide

1-888-595-9159

PearlSeasCruises.com

Best columns: Europe

FRANCE

Puritanical moralizing is un-French

Camille Sarazin
Bfmtv.com

American-style puritanism has infected French politics, said Camille Sarazin. Benjamin Griveaux, the former spokesman for President Emmanuel Macron's centrist government, was forced to withdraw his candidacy for mayor of Paris last week after explicit videos and sexts that he allegedly sent to his mistress were leaked online. Griveaux, who has made much of his conservative values as a married father of three, didn't confirm whether he was the individual in the images, but said he was quitting the race to protect his family. The leak, orchestrated by self-promoting Russian performance artist Pyotr Pavlensky, is an outrageous breach of France's political norms, which have always held that "private and public life are separated by an impermeable wall." Other politicians from across the political spectrum voiced support for that separation and for Griveaux, 42. His main rival in the race for Paris mayor, Socialist incumbent Anne Hidalgo, said private affairs were "not worthy of democratic debate," while Sébastien Chenu of the far-right National Rally said that France should "not look to elect saints, but people who have ideas and skills." Still, pundits worry that despite universal condemnation, the door has been opened to personal attacks. Commentator Alain Duhamel said France has now imported "the worst of American political life. Welcome to the United States."

NETHERLANDS

Far right keeps lying about immigrants

Raoul du Pré
De Volkskrant

Dutch nationalists are at it again, said Raoul du Pré. The latest proponent of an "unadulterated racist agenda" is Thierry Baudet, leader of the far-right party Forum for Democracy. On Twitter and Instagram earlier this month he claimed that two female friends had been "seriously harassed by four Moroccans on a train." Saying the "childishly naive" Dutch must end their "politically correct bulls---," he urged voters to back his party in order to "save this country." But the story wasn't true. The rail company clarified that three of the men involved in the incident were actually plainclothes ticket inspectors. The fourth, meanwhile, was a police officer who'd been called over by the inspectors when the women refused to show their tickets. Several days later, Baudet admitted that he'd been too quick to link the confrontation to mass immigration. But this "half-hearted" apology shouldn't get him off the hook. He is guilty of an "eager, willful" attempt to blame an entire ethnic community for an imagined offense, and he now faces a police investigation for the false claim. But following his party's shock success in last year's local elections, it is essential that voters send a "clear message" in the 2021 general election that racism has no place in the Netherlands.

United Kingdom: Labour Party splinters over trans rights

Britain's opposition Labour Party is supposed to be picking a new leader, said **Jack Maidment** in the ***Daily Mail***, but instead it has "descended into civil war over trans rights." After the election debacle in December, when it lost dozens of long-held seats in working-class areas to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party, Labour was clear that its far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn had to be replaced. But instead of debating how to win back lost voters and tacking to the center, it is now threatening to alienate women. Of the party's three leadership candidates, two—Rebecca Long-Bailey and Lisa Nandy—have signed a radical 12-point plan drawn up by a previously unknown group of trans-rights activists. The plan calls for anyone who doesn't believe that trans women should be allowed in all women-only spaces—domestic violence refuges, women's prisons, restrooms—to be expelled from the party. It specifically calls out two left-wing groups, Women's Place UK and the LGB Alliance, as "transphobic organizations" whose members must be shamed and shunned. In response, thousands of female Labour members tweeted their anger under the hashtag #ExpelMe.

P 2020
LEADERSHIP 2020
Labour
LEADERS
Labour

Long-Bailey, Nandy, and Starmer: Leadership hopefuls

AP

Labour is preparing "a witch hunt" against feminists like me, said **Janice Turner** in ***The Times***. We don't want to discriminate against trans women. But are we really not allowed to say that there are certain spaces that should be free of penises? Can't we discuss concerns about early diagnosis of gender dysmorphia, for example, or the fairness of male-bodied athletes competing in women's sports, without being labeled bigots? It's telling that it took Labour months of agonized soul-searching before it expelled the anti-Semites in its ranks, said **Suzanne Moore** in ***The Daily Telegraph***, yet the party is now eager to drum out uppity women. I guess "to tell women we no longer have the right to autonomous organization has always been the aim of the dude bros who run Labour."

How dare cisgender people presume to tell trans people what is or isn't bigotry, said **Vic Parsons** in ***Independent.co.uk***. White Labour Party members would never tell blacks to shut up about racism. Women's Place UK claims to be protecting women's safety, but men have never needed female birth certificates to prey on women, and trans people like me refuse "to let our lives be put up for debate." The trans community is now where the gay community was two decades ago. So to those Labour members who refuse to be on the right side of history: "Don't forget to close the door on your way out."

This is Sophie's Choice for progressives, said **Gaby Hinsliff** in ***The Guardian***, an issue concerning "two marginalized groups, each demanding protection from the other." But when the Left competes for wokeness, the only winner is the Right. As the front-runner for leadership, Keir Starmer, says, the party needs to "dial it down." Can't Labour just acknowledge "that two sides of the argument exist"?

Canada: Do protesters speak for the First Nations?

Demonstrators block a railroad in Ontario.

Reuters

The Canadian economy is being held hostage by environmentalists and indigenous rights activists, said the *Toronto Sun* in an editorial. Coastal GasLink is planning to build a 420-mile natural gas pipeline through the British Columbian interior, and it has signed agreements with 20 elected First Nations band councils along the route, including five of the six councils in the Wet'suwet'en nation. But Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs claim the authority of these councils applies only to federal reservations, not to the 8,500 square miles of traditional territory—land that was never formally ceded to Canada—that sit in the middle of the $5 billion pipeline's path. The chiefs have refused to give Coastal GasLink access to the land, and last week police enforced a court injunction and cleared indigenous activists from the work site. Protests soon erupted across the country. Vancouver, Edmonton, and Ottawa saw sit-ins and marches, while Mohawk activists blocked train tracks in Quebec, causing Canadian railways to shut down freight traffic as well as passenger train service affecting tens of thousands of riders. Yet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whose Liberal government supports the pipeline but who loves to play First Nations defender, has not ordered the troublemakers arrested, leaving law enforcement just "twiddling its thumbs."

This is "social justice extremism," said **Jonathan Kay** in the *National Post.* The white-guilt folks who claim Canada was founded on genocide have partnered with eco-radicals who oppose all energy projects. They are breaking the law and hurting working-class people who rely on trains. Where are the protests in solidarity with the First Nations who back the pipeline? asked **Robyn Urback** in *The Globe and Mail.* The elected councils want "change to come to their communities." Ordinary Wet'suwet'en don't support the hereditary chiefs, some of whom actually ran for council seats in the last election and lost to pro-pipeline candidates.

These elections are a colonialist sham, said **Doug Cuthand** in the ***Saskatoon StarPhoenix.*** Governance by elected council was imposed on us to create a "one-size-fits-all Indian Act version of a federally regulated municipality." Each First Nation has its own traditional form of governance, and the hereditary power structure of the Wet'suwet'en ensures that their land is defended and passed on from generation to generation. These chiefs aren't totally opposed to the pipeline. They proposed "an alternate route that was environmentally more responsible," but GasLink rejected it. That intransigence resulted in this impasse.

The issue goes to the heart of Canada–First Nations relations, said **Amber Bracken** in *Maclean's.* The cash-strapped elected councils do govern certain regions of tribal land. And yes, some were bought off by a gas company that told them the project would go ahead regardless, so they might as well say yes to "a payout." But the chiefs traditionally speak for the whole nation. Until a balance of power can be formally agreed, Canadian authorities—not First Nations—will continue to call the shots.

MEXICO

Slaughter of women goes ignored

Carmen Morán Breña
El País (Spain)

Mexican women are furious at their government's anemic response to an epidemic of gender violence, said Carmen Morán Breña. An average of 10 women a day are killed in Mexico, mostly by current or former partners—a chilling toll that has sparked months of protests by women's groups. Their anger reached boiling point last week when Ingrid Escamilla, a 25-year-old Mexico City resident, was murdered and skinned by her partner. Yet President Andrés Manuel López Obrador merely reacted with exasperation when asked about the femicide crisis, saying the issue was being "manipulated" by his opponents. Worse, his attorney general, Alejandro Gertz Manero, has proposed eliminating the charge of femicide, saying it is too difficult to determine whether any given female homicide victim was murdered because of her gender. María Candelaria Ochoa Ávalos, a lawmaker with López Obrador's party who heads his commission on violence, argues that misogyny is entrenched in society and so must be "fought in the family, in the school, in the unions, in the institutions, in the churches." That's a cop-out. The president has almost total power in our political system; López Obrador has simply chosen not to use it to halt the mounting casualties in this war against women.

RUSSIA

Stalinist show trials are back

Andrei Kolesnikov
The Moscow Times

President Vladimir Putin must be feeling insecure, said Andrei Kolesnikov. Why else would his government be holding show trials and handing out "Stalinist" sentences? A military court last week sentenced seven young antifascist activists to prison terms of up to 18 years, insisting the men were plotting terrorist attacks. The court didn't care that the charges appeared utterly fabricated or that the accused men said they were tortured into confessing. "We have to be absolutely clear here." Imposing such punishments on activists who have "neither killed, shot, nor beaten anybody, nor stolen billions—unlike most of the heroic representatives of various elites—is pure Stalinism." Even in the Khrushchev era, sentences were less severe. Anti-Soviet agitators got perhaps a few months or years in prison, a far cry from the punishments meted out today to demonstrators charged with such minor offenses as throwing plastic cups at police officers or "inflicting moral suffering" on them. The Kremlin crime syndicate is trying to frighten the populace into submission by showing that they will "protect themselves and their beloved cronies using any means." The warning is clear: In Putin's Russia, any young person who dares complain will be locked away.

Noted

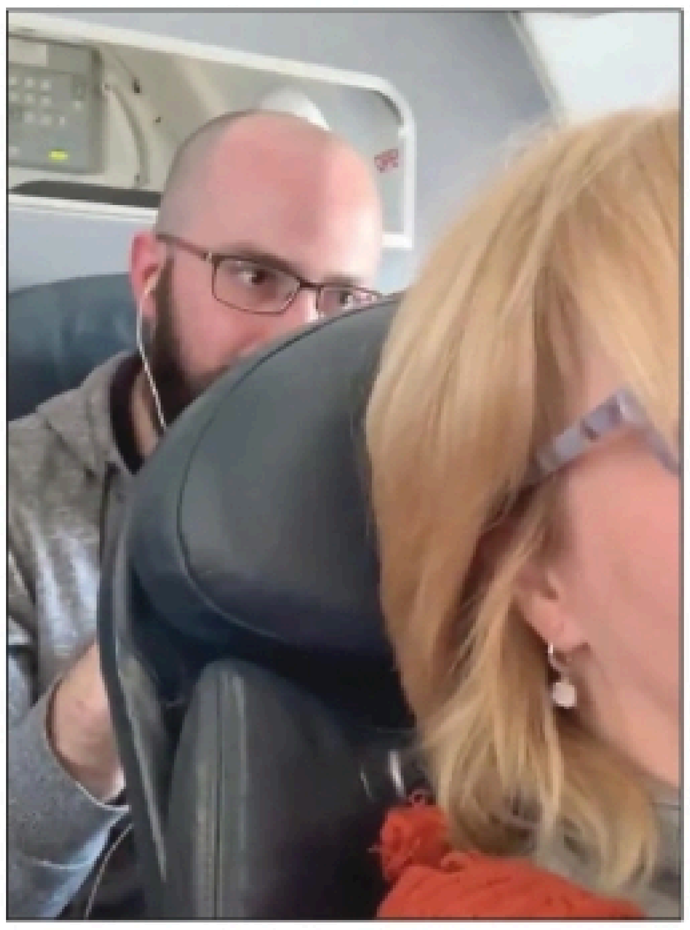
■ Uber and Lyft have exacerbated big cities' traffic problems by luring customers away from public transportation and walking, according to multiple studies. In Chicago, ride-hailing trips starting or ending downtown rose over 300 percent between 2015 and 2018; in San Francisco, an average downtown traffic slowdown of 2.5 miles an hour between 2010 and 2016 has been linked to ride-hailing apps.
The Wall Street Journal

■ President Trump may block national security and State Department officials from listening in on his calls to foreign leaders. "When you call a foreign leader, people listen," Trump said in a radio interview. "I may end the practice entirely." Trump's Ukraine scandal began when a whistleblower filed a complaint about his call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.
CNN.com

■ Cruise ship bookings have dropped 10 to 15 percent because of fears raised by outbreaks of coronavirus and extended quarantines on two cruise ships, according to an organization of travel agencies. Stories about the virus are "front page news every day," said Richard Fain, Royal Caribbean's chief executive. "That makes people a bit more cautious."
The Washington Post

■ President Trump was the guest of honor at a fundraiser at the Palm Beach, Fla., estate of billionaire investor Nelson Peltz, with couples paying $580,600 to attend. Trump has attended at least 49 fundraisers with elite donors since October 2017.
The Washington Post

Airline seats: Reclining dispute gets physical



A video of the chair-punching incident

Here we go again, said **Christopher Elliott** in ***USAToday.com***. The raging debate about whether it's "a jerk move" to recline your economy airline seat has escalated to a new level of hostility. Last week, an American Airlines passenger posted a 45-second video of the man seated in back of her as he repeatedly punched her reclined chair. The recliner, Wendi Williams, says she complained to a flight attendant about the man's behavior. But the attendant sided with the puncher and told her to delete the video. When Williams refused, she was threatened with federal prosecution. In response, Williams threatened to slap the airline with a slander suit, as well as sue for medical expenses for a neck issue that she says the punching aggravated. She also wants the unidentified man charged with assault and the flight attendant fired. "I will recline!" she defiantly tweeted.

Good for her, said **Paula Froelich** in ***NYPost.com***. The option to recline is obviously implied by the presence of a button. While I understand that the puncher was seated in the last row of economy and couldn't recline himself, "we've all been there." He should have just checked in early to get a better seat or perhaps paid "a little more for extra leg room." Look—if passengers buy a seat that's capable of reclining, "they have a right to recline it," said **Geoffrey James** in ***Inc.com.*** Even if that weren't so, nothing would justify this moron having a tantrum like a "testy 3-year-old." He needs to remember that fares are so low only because "airlines pack as many seats as possible into each plane."

That's the real problem, said **Luke O'Neil** in ***TheGuardian.com***. Since the late 1970s, economy-class seats have shrunk from as much as 36 inches of legroom to as little as 28. Greedy airlines are trying to squeeze ever more profit by squeezing ever more passengers into a tighter space. And when conflict ensues, said **Victoria Song** in ***Gizmodo.com,*** the airlines blame the passengers. Delta CEO Ed Bastian reacted to the punching controversy by saying "I never recline," and recommending that reclining passengers ask permission from the person behind, "if it's OK." The solution is not better etiquette, but a decision by the airlines to start treating their passengers "like human beings instead of chattel."

Kelly: No longer silent

John Kelly has jumped off the Trump train, said **Kevin Cullen** in ***The Boston Globe***. In a speech at Drew University, President Trump's former chief of staff broke ranks with his former boss and defended Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a decorated war hero who was pulled from the National Security Council and escorted from the White House in retaliation for his impeachment testimony. Vindman "did exactly what we teach them to do," said Kelly, a retired Marine general. "We teach them, 'Don't follow an illegal order.'" Kelly also defended the news media, called migrants "overwhelmingly good people," and said Trump was naive for thinking he could persuade North Korea to give up nuclear weapons. Trump fired back on Twitter, saying Kelly was in "way over his head" as chief of staff and has a "military and legal obligation" to "keep his mouth shut." Actually, the reverse is true: Kelly is warning Americans that "Trump is an insecure, vindictive man who retaliated against a career Army officer who literally bled for his country."

The chatter generated by Kelly's words has "largely avoided the most important point," said **Greg Sargent** in ***The Washington Post***: "Trump's former chief of staff *fully validated the case against Trump that got him impeached*." Kelly made it clear he believes Trump subverted U.S. policy on Ukraine's defensive fight against Russia to his own political ends and that Vindman was right to object. Kelly gave voice to an even greater heresy, said **Chris Cillizza** at ***CNN.com.*** He said the media "is not the enemy of the people," and warned that those who only watch Fox News are just reinforcing their beliefs and aren't "informed citizens." It was a "powerful" rebuke of the blatantly pro-Trump network Republicans say they trust more than any other.

Kelly's about-face is welcome, said **Rick Wilson** in ***TheDailyBeast.com,*** but it's "too little, too late, and too lame." As Trump's most senior adviser for 18 months, Kelly knew full well what a danger the ignorant, reckless president posed to our country, but "with an eye on his military pension and future job opportunities kept his mouth shut." Vindman "showed more balls in one day" than Kelly ever did in Trump's service. Still, "better late than never," said the Newark, N.J., ***Star-Ledger*** in an editorial. For Trump's former enablers, speaking up now won't "wipe that stubborn orange stain off their reputations." But "they owe it to the country, just the same."

Wendi Williams/Caters News, AP

Federal buildings: Bringing back the columns

The Lincoln Memorial: More, please.

Wikipedia

The Founders "would surely applaud" President Trump's executive order to "Make Federal Architecture Beautiful Again," said **Myron Magnet** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The president wants to make classical design the default in Washington, D.C., and the recommended style for federal buildings nationwide. That template of columns and arches evokes "ideals of self-governance rooted in Greek democracy and Roman republicanism." Most Americans detest the "hideous" modernist and brutalist designs of recent decades, such as San Francisco's Federal Building, which "resembles a cyclops mated with a prison." Most modernist buildings are soulless, interchangeable, and overwhelming, "exactly the opposite sensation of the exhilaration you feel in the Capitol Rotunda or Grand Central Terminal." Fascism birthed modernism, said **Theodore Dalrymple** in *TheAmericanConservative.com*, producing monstrosities valued for their "sheer size and human coldness." Public buildings should serve the people, not "architects who want to show off to each other."

Symbolically, this might be "one of the most blatantly authoritarian things" Trump has done, said **Adam Rogers** in *Wired.com.* "Aesthetics are subjective," and there are plenty of interesting modernist buildings in U.S. cities. But the Trump administration "turns up its Roman nose" at any kind of regional expression and demands nothing but neoclassical columns, domes, and cornices. No style "has a monopoly on quality," said **Blair Kamin** in the *Chicago Tribune*. The previous federal guidelines, established during the Cold War, called for buildings to reflect "the diverse character of the American people." By imposing a single standard, Trump's proposal "would undercut the very democratic ideals that classicism is supposed to represent."

Actually, modern architecture isn't very diverse, said **Ross Douthat** in *The New York Times*. Liberals tend to think of public architecture proposals as "independent" and "nonideological." That's "silly," since liberals have a "permanent bias" toward daring modernist architecture. Today, most "elite cultural institutions" such as college campuses, courthouses, and museums are modernist. "Making American architecture a little more traditional" would give conservatives more faith in these institutions. The Trump administration draft order—which doesn't ban or defund other styles—would provide more balance, while producing "a little surplus beauty along the way."

Bloomberg: Why Democrats are torn

"Mike Bloomberg has offered blue America a Faustian bargain," said **Eric Levitz** in *NYMag.com*. If Democrats will just put aside their opposition to big money dominating our nation's politics, and their solidarity with people of color, labor, and the #MeToo movement, the New York City businessman will use as much of his $63 billion fortune as necessary to "make the bad man in the White House go away." Many Democrats are tempted, partly because of their fear Bernie Sanders is "unelectable," but they should reject Bloomberg's "indecent proposal." He's a "Wall Street tycoon" with a record of outrageously sexist comments—women employees have said he frequently commented on their looks, and one alleged Bloomberg told her when she revealed she was pregnant, "Kill it!" In 2015, he defended the racist practice of stop-and-frisk he promoted as New York City's mayor—saying throwing minority kids "up against the walls" was a good way to confiscate guns. His nomination would make Democrats look like "raging hypocrites."

They'd also be trading one would-be authoritarian for another, said **Ross Douthat** in *The New York Times*. As a ruthless technocrat with a deep-seated belief that he knows better, Bloomberg has long demonstrated "imperial instincts." This is a man who bulldozed his way to a third term as New York City mayor despite a law limiting him to two. And over those 12 years, he turned the city into a "surveillance state" to combat both terrorism and crime, deploying cameras, facial recognition, and undercover officers to spy on civilians—even surveillance drones. Bloomberg is selling the "Democratic elite" an illusion his money will beat Trump, said **Holman W. Jenkins Jr.** in *The Wall Street Journal*. But Americans will soon get sick of Bloomberg's blizzard of ads and "tune them out."

Undoubtedly, Bloomberg has "made mistakes," said **Thomas Friedman** in *The New York Times*. But over the years, Bloomberg has supported and donated enormous sums to "virtually every progressive cause," including gun control, climate change, abortion rights, affordable housing, and education reform. He's also "tough as a rattlesnake" and rich enough to build "a machine big enough" to take on Trump's. In Trump's assault on our democratic institutions and norms, "we face a national emergency." Democrats have to run the candidate best able to make Trump "a one-term president." For that mission, Bloomberg has "the right stuff."

Wit & Wisdom

"I am not the kind of person women fall in love with. I sort of grow on them, like a fungus."
Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, quoted in The Daily Telegraph (U.K.)

"If you make up your mind not to be happy, there's no reason why you shouldn't have a fairly good time."
Writer Edith Wharton, quoted in Forbes

"Beware of all enterprises that require new clothes."
Henry David Thoreau, quoted in Hyperallergic.com

"The only thing new in this world is the history you haven't read yet."
President Harry Truman, quoted in TheDispatch.com

"You may glory in a team triumphant, but you fall in love with a team in defeat."
Sportswriter Roger Kahn, quoted in The Washington Post

"In a world as wrong as this one, all we can do is make things as right as we can."
Novelist Barbara Kingsolver, quoted in The New York Times

"Anything invented after you're 35 is against the natural order of things."
Author Douglas Adams, quoted in ArtsJournal.com

Poll watch

■ In a global survey of 8,000 people in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, the U.K., and the U.S., **54%** see the coronavirus as "a high or very high threat to the world," and **33%** see it as a "moderate threat." **85%** of those surveyed support mandatory screening of those traveling from infected countries, and **66%** think the government should ban travel to infected countries. **46%** think that the outbreak will not be over anytime soon.
Ipsos

Epidemics: A disease of the disinformation age

The new coronavirus is the first global pandemic to unfold on social media, said **Karen Hao** and **Tanya Basu** in the *MIT Technology Review*, and it has not gone well. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization called the virus an "infodemic" because of the "overabundance of information—some accurate and some not." Social media has helped some journalists get "a more accurate picture of the situation" inside China than state media has provided. And several Chinese doctors used the internet "to raise alarms about the severity of the situation," before being swiftly censored by Beijing. Unfortunately, the rapid spread of misinformation also "sets the coronavirus apart from previous viral outbreaks," such as SARS in 2003. WHO has been working with Facebook, Twitter, and China's Tencent and TikTok apps to staunch the flood of fake posts, including claims that Shanghai has been "shut down" and that the virus can be cured by cannabis. But they are fighting against an "avalanche of content."

Li: Coronavirus whistleblower

China's last big epidemic happened before the emergence of We Chat, China's preeminent social network, said **Mary Hui** and **Jane Li** in *Qz.com.* When SARS broke out in 2003, the Chinese government could create a "virtual news blackout" that kept the early cases of the virus secret for months. "Now, the sheer amount of information shared every minute by internet users in China means that it's impossible for the state to maintain a watertight seal on what's posted online." Make no mistake—the wave of "relatively free information sharing" has not changed the system of information control in China, said **Han Zhang** in *The New Yorker*, "but it has temporarily overwhelmed it." Dr. Li Wenliang tried to issue warnings online about a new virus in the city of Wuhan in December, weeks before the outbreak was made public. He was silenced by the authorities, and his death from the virus this month, at age 33, triggered mass outrage online. A phrase "unthinkable on the Chinese internet," the hashtag #WeDemandFreedomOfSpeech, even began trending.

Surprisingly, the platform doing the most to actually stop the spread of misinformation has been Facebook, said **Bhaskar Chakravorti** in *Bloomberg.com.* In contrast to its laissez-faire stance on political ads, for this crisis Facebook—which is banned in China—has removed false information and blocked pernicious hashtags on Instagram. It has even given "free advertising credits to organizations running coronavirus education campaigns." Governments, however, can't rely on social media to do the right thing, said **Michael Brendan Dougherty** in *NationalReview.com.* Public officials "need to think hard about how they communicate in a new world in which they are far from the only source of compelling information." Getting ahead of a public health crisis, instead of lying or issuing blanket reassurances, would be a start.

Innovation of the week

The NexDock 2 could spell doom for the low-end laptop, said Matthew Miller in *ZDNet.com.* The $259 device looks much like a regular laptop, with a 13.3-inch display, a full keyboard, and several ports on the side. "However, it has no CPU, no internal memory, and no fan." But hook this shell up to a Samsung, Huawei, or LG phone, and it becomes a fully functioning computer terminal. The NexDock 2 can be used to mirror your phone or to display and control Samsung's PC-like DeX interface. In ZDNet's test it worked very well with Microsoft Office and Gmail, as well as Google Play Movies, Disney+, and Netflix. It conveniently let me keep all my content on the phone and use the phone's cellular connection, giving me "a laptop experience with very little compromise."

Bytes: What's new in tech

Repeated warnings before Tesla failure

A driver who died when his Tesla smashed into a highway barrier while on autopilot had previously complained about the system aiming him toward the same barrier, said Catherine Thorbecke in *ABCNews.com.* Apple engineer Walter Huang had told his family that when he drove past the future crash site in the left lane on his way to work in Mountain View, Calif., his Tesla Model X "would steer left" toward the concrete barrier. Huang told them he had "to manually take control to stay within the left lane." According to a report from federal regulators released last week, he'd even warned a Tesla technician about the danger. Despite all this, his car crashed into the same barrier in March 2018. Huang's "phone data showed the game *Three Kingdoms* was active at the time" the car hit the barrier at 68 mph.

The Bloomberg meme machine

Michael Bloomberg's presidential campaign is trying to raise its meme game, said Taylor Lorenz in *The New York Times*. The former New York City mayor has started working with a group called Meme 2020, "a new company formed by some of the people behind extremely influential" Instagram accounts. That includes Mick Purzycki, the chief executive of Jerry Media, one of the most "powerful forces in the influencer economy." The campaign has been placing sponsored posts on satirical accounts, including @GrapeJuiceBoys, which has more than 2.7 million followers, and @Tank.Sinatra, which has 2.3 million followers. The posts take the form of "fake direct messages" from the 78-year-old candidate himself, including one in which Bloomberg is shown asking one of the founders of @Tank.Sinatra to "make me look cool."

Motorola's flip is a total flop

"I wish I could tell you where I think the new Motorola Razr went wrong," said Dieter Bohn in *TheVerge.com,* "but there are too many options to choose from." The Verizon-only Razr is supposed to recall the popular Razr clamshells of the mid-2000s, which would flip open and close with a satisfying click. But at $1,499, "it delivers so few of the things you'd expect." When it's open, "you can feel weird dips and bumps underneath the screen." It's loaded with annoying Verizon junkware, and has a camera that would be subpar at one-third the price. Worst of all, there's a "grating and awful" creaking noise when you open and close it, so it fails at "the one job" of a flip phone.

Reuters

Made in New Hampshire.
Enjoyed in Switzerland.

Fuller's Sugarhouse in Lancaster, New Hampshire, uses Google Ads to sell its products to customers around the world who are in search of pure maple syrup.

Grow with Google

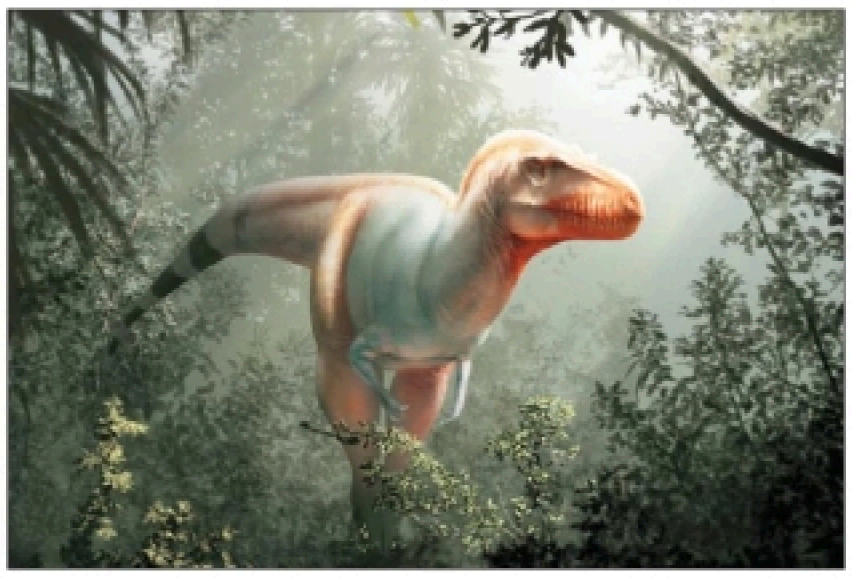
American businesses are growing with tools and training from Google.

google.com/economicimpact

Bumblebees in dire trouble

Climate change is pushing the much-loved bumblebee to the brink of extinction, new research has found. The fuzzy, buzzy insects are among the most important pollinators in the Northern Hemisphere, helping to spread pollen and fertilize many wild plants, as well as important crops such as tomatoes, blueberries, and squash. But their numbers have been dropping for years, and to understand why, scientists looked at a database of 550,000 records detailing where the bees have been spotted since 1901. It showed that bumblebee populations had crashed by 46 percent in North America and by 17 percent across Europe in recent years when compared with the base period of 1901 to 1974. The biggest declines were in areas that have experienced the most extreme temperature swings, suggesting that climate change is a significant factor. High temperatures can cause bumblebees to overheat and can also kill the flowers on which they depend. Adding to the problem is that bees aren't migrating to cooler areas. "They're simply not able to colonize new regions at the same rate that they're disappearing from old ones," lead author Peter Soroye, from the University of Ottawa, tells NPR.org. The authors stress that climate change isn't the only cause of the bees' decline; pesticide use and habitat loss also play a role. They say people can help the troubled insects by planting native flowers in their gardens and leaving out leaf piles and fallen logs to create shade for the bees on scorching days.

The fuzzy insects can't cope with the heat.


Meet the 'Reaper of Death'

T. rex's new relative

Paleontologists in Canada have identified a new species of tyrannosaur—the oldest member of the family discovered yet in North America. *Thanatotheristes degrootorum* lived during the Cretaceous Period some 79 million years ago. It predates the most famous of the tyrannosaurs, the *T. rex*, by about 13 million years. The bipedal *Thanatotheristes* (Greek for "Reaper of Death") would have cut an intimidating figure: It stood about 8 feet tall and had a long, deep snout, ridges on its skull, and razor-sharp teeth nearly 3 inches long. From nose to tail it stretched some 26 feet. The tyrannosaur's fossils were discovered by a Canadian couple hiking beside the Bow River in southern Alberta in 2010. Paleontologists studied these skull fragments—including jawbones, teeth, and a partial cheekbone—and determined they belonged to an entirely new species. "There are very few species of tyrannosaurids, relatively speaking," co-author Darla Zelenitsky, from the University of Calgary, tells TheGuardian.com. "Because of the nature of the food chain, these large apex predators were rare compared with herbivorous, or plant-eating, dinosaurs."

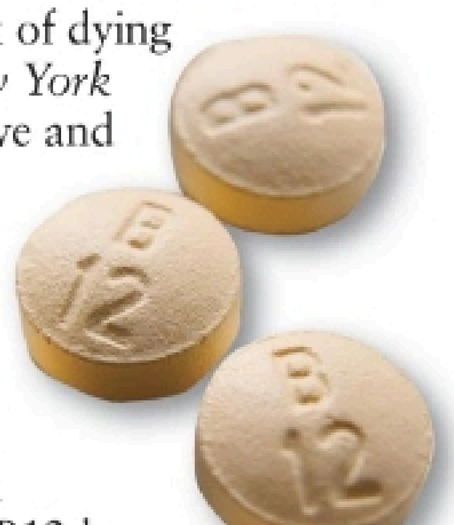
Mysterious signals from space

Something in distant space is sending out radio signals at regular intervals—and scientists have no idea what it is. So-called fast radio bursts, or FRBs, were first detected in 2007, reports *USA Today*. These pulses of radio waves last only about a thousandth of a second, come from all over the universe, and rarely repeat themselves. But for a year starting in September 2018, researchers noticed that one FRB was sending out a burst or two each hour for four days, then going silent for 12 days, and then repeating the pattern. The signal, which was traced to a galaxy 500 million light-years away, is almost certainly not the work of aliens. "Even a highly intelligent species would be very unlikely to produce energies like this," the Massachusetts Institute of Technology said in a statement. A more likely explanation is that the bursts are coming from a neutron star—the collapsed core of a giant star—that is orbiting a larger object, such as a black hole, which periodically blocks the signals. Whatever its cause, scientists hope this phenomenon will help them map where matter is distributed across the universe.

Detecting cancer early

Scientists may have found a way to detect cancer up to 35 years before current diagnosis, reports *The Daily Telegraph* (U.K.). As people get older, their cells divide in a way that introduces errors into their DNA. Most of these genetic mutations are harmless, but some trigger the uncontrollable cell growth that leads to tumors. If scientists can pinpoint which mutations are potentially cancerous—and figure out how to test for them—they could recommend at an early stage lifestyle changes or treatment that might prevent the disease. For the new study, researchers examined 47 million genetic changes in more than 2,500 tumors, covering 38 cancer types. By looking at the mutation rates over time, they were able to identify the exact moment when the genetic code changed in a way that signaled cancer was on the way. They found that ovarian cancer can be seen up to 35 years before it would normally be diagnosed, and cancers of the kidney, bladder, pancreas, and skin 20 years before diagnosis. "One day it may be possible to detect these mutations, say for example, with a blood test," said Clemency Jolly, a researcher at the Francis Crick Institute in London. "These tests sound a bit like science fiction at the moment, [but] may become possible in 10 to 20 years' time."

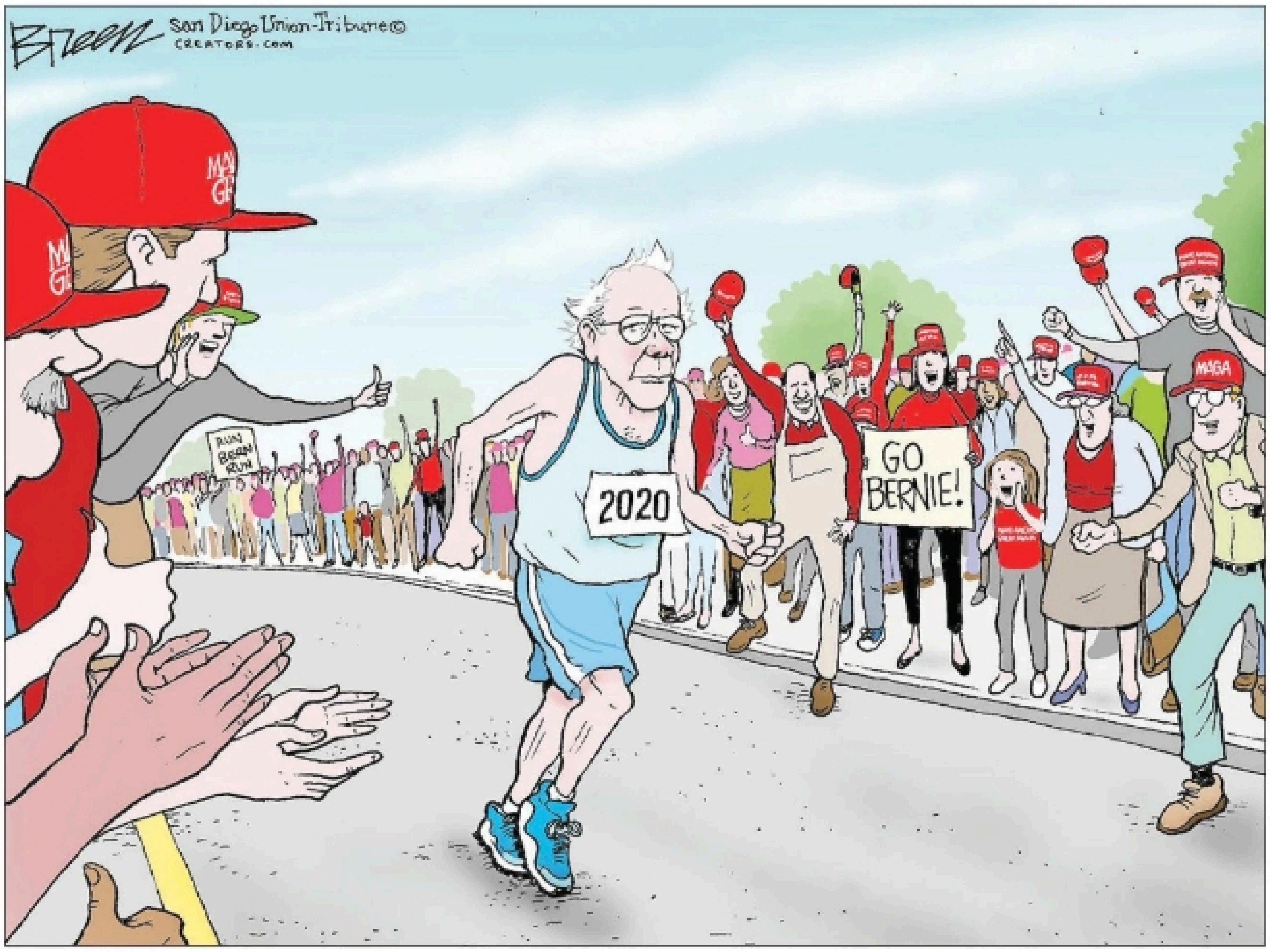
Health scare of the week
Too much vitamin B12

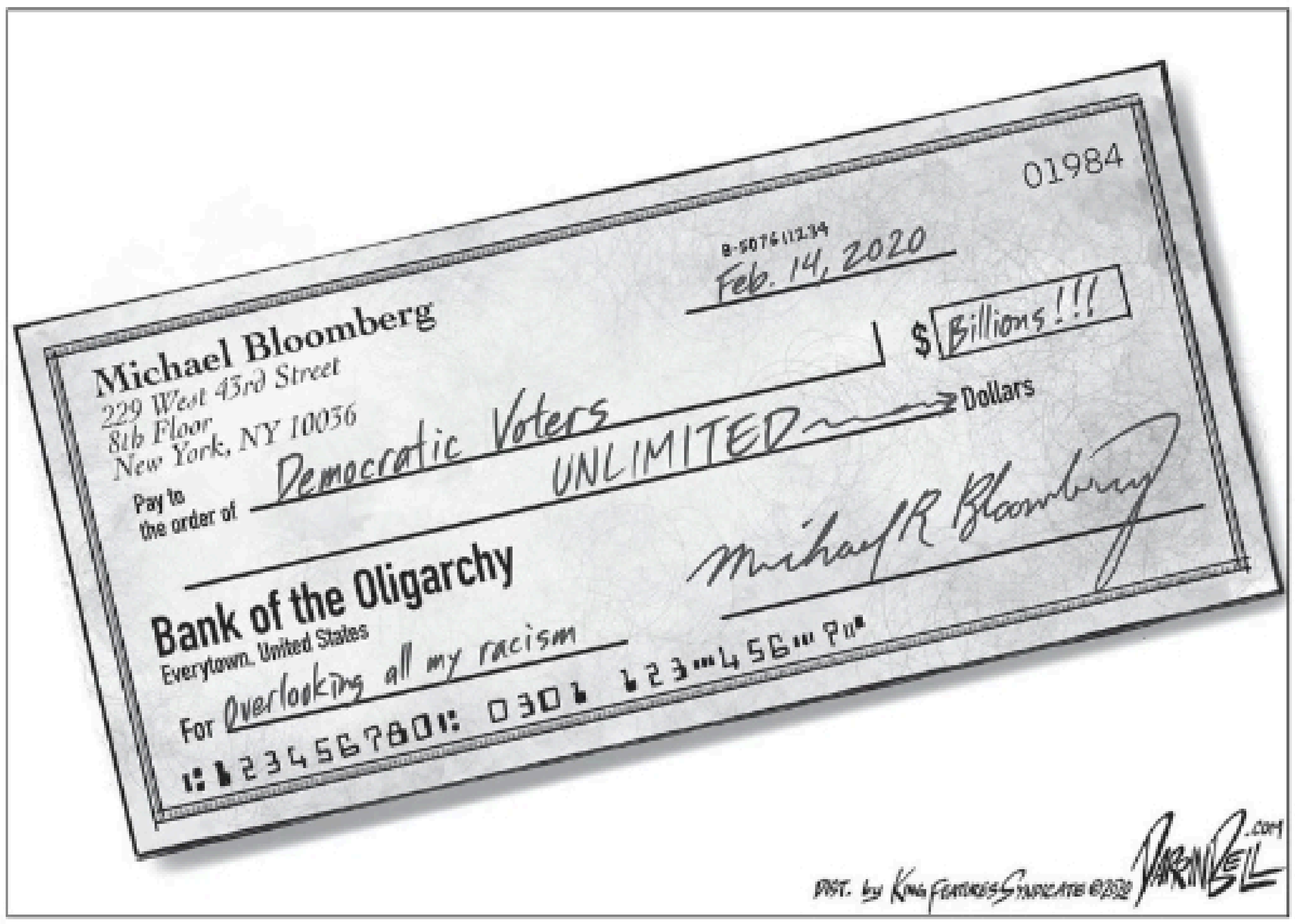


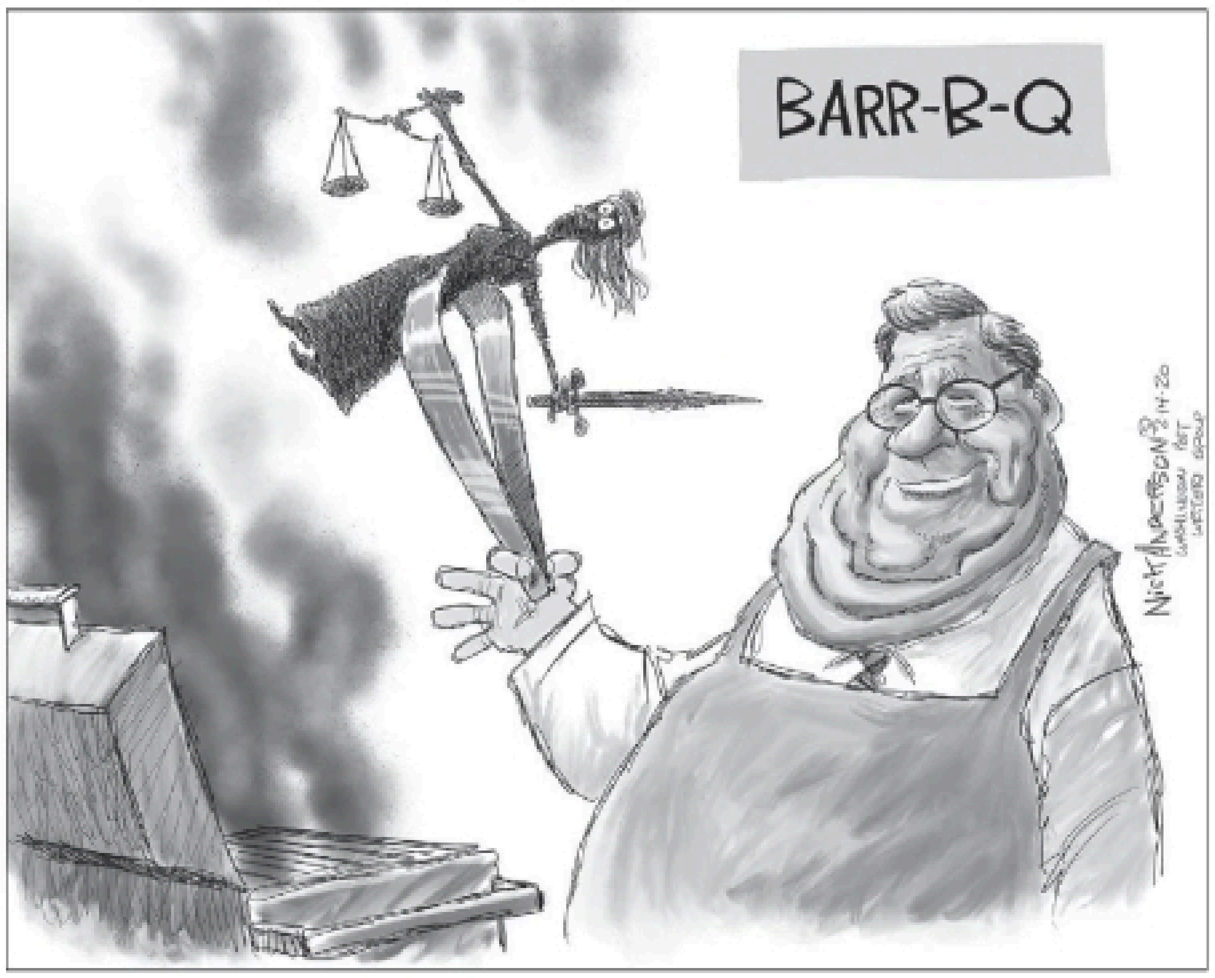
People who absorb too much vitamin B12 may have a higher risk of dying early, reports *The New York Times*. Crucial for nerve and blood cell health, the nutrient is found in meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. Many vegans and others who don't get enough of the vitamin through their diet top up their B12 levels with supplements. To explore whether the nutrient has any harmful effects, researchers in the Netherlands examined B12 levels in some 5,500 healthy men and women for an average of eight years. None of the participants was taking supplements. After controlling for factors such as age, sex, and various diseases, the researchers discovered that premature death rates among people with the highest B12 levels were almost double the rates of those with the lowest. The study's authors, who note that the findings don't prove cause and effect, say they're not sure why high levels of B12 might affect death rates in this way. Senior author Stephan Bakker, from University Medical Center Groningen, says it "might change the gut microbiota in ways that could be harmful—no one really knows."

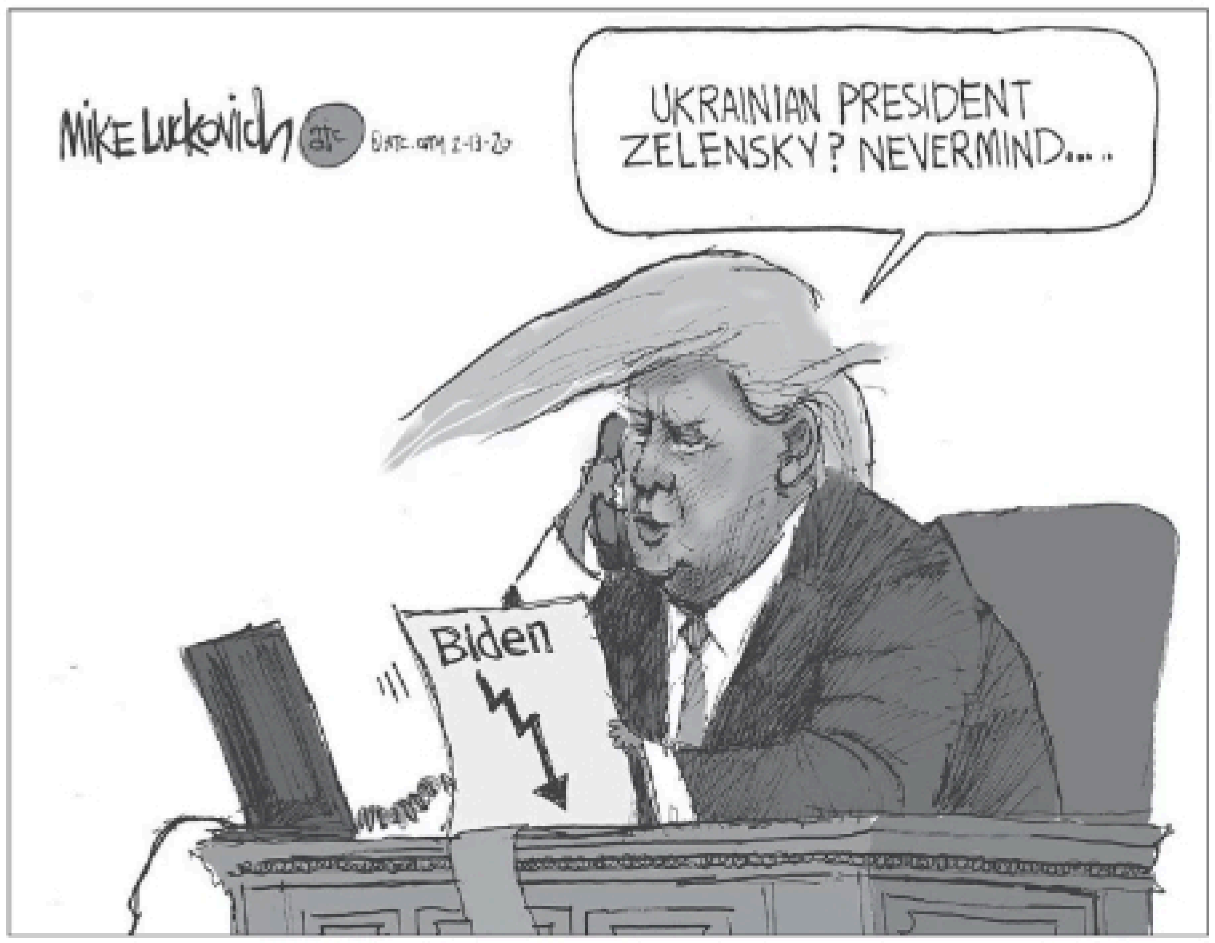
USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab, Royal Tyrrell Museum, Newscom

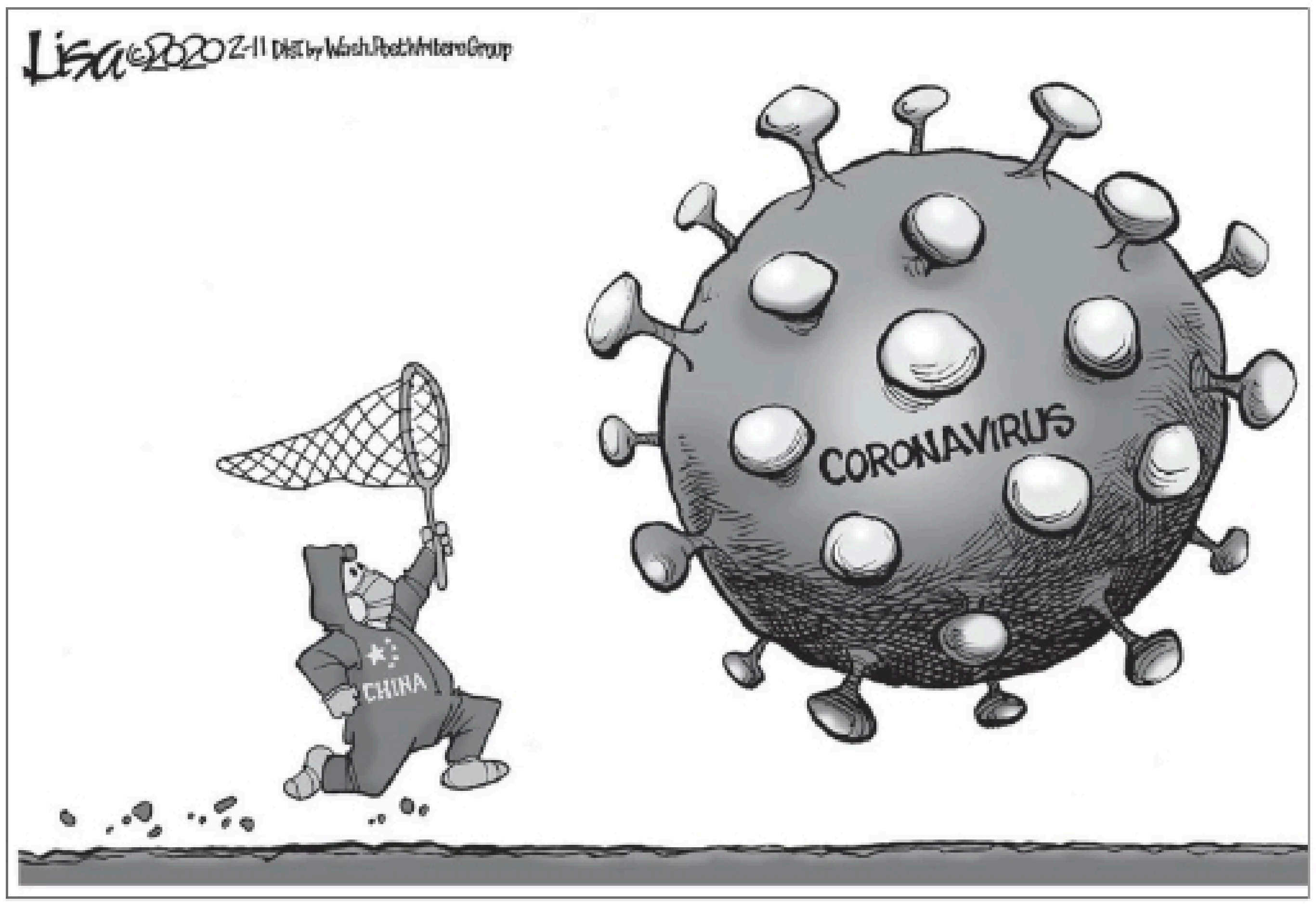
Pick of the week's cartoons


Breen San Diego Union-Tribune©
CREATORS.COM
RUN BERNI RUN
2020
GO BERNIE!
MAGA


01984
Michael Bloomberg
229 West 43rd Street
8th Floor
New York, NY 10036
8-5076112.34
Feb. 14, 2020
$ Billions!!!
Pay to the order of Democratic Voters
UNLIMITED Dollars
Bank of the Oligarchy
Everytown, United States
Michael R Bloomberg
For Overlooking all my racism
⑆123456780⑆ 0301 123⑈456⑈78⑈
DIST. by King Features Syndicate ©2020 DarrinBell.com


BARR-B-Q
Nick Anderson ©2020 2-14-20


MIKE LUCKOVICH AJC
UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT ZELENSKY? NEVERMIND....
Biden


Lisa ©2020 2-11 Dist by Wash.Post Writers Group
CORONAVIRUS
CHINA

For more political cartoons, visit: www.theweek.com/cartoons.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Scientist and the Spy: A True Story of China, the FBI, and Industrial Espionage

by Mara Hvistendahl
(Riverhead, $28)

Who knew Iowa was such a hotbed of international intrigue? said **Claude Peck** in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Mara Hvistendahl's fascinating account of agricultural espionage begins in 2011 outside Des Moines, where the sight of an Asian man walking in a cornfield prompted a local farmer to call the cops. The three sheriff's deputies didn't know that the trespasser and the driver who'd dropped him off worked for a Chinese agribusiness firm and were trying to steal trade secrets from two large, rich U.S. rivals by collecting genetically engineered corn seed. Instead, the case against the driver, Robert Mo, would require 73 FBI agents and a yearslong investigation. Hvistendahl, to her credit, "gives the corn-stealing caper the full thriller treatment." But she also makes clear that two bigger stories shaped Mo's fate: the $52 billion global seed market and the FBI's growing focus on Chinese corporate espionage.

Genetically modified corn on display at a trade show

Both the hunted and the hunter come across as bumblers, said **Howard French** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Mo, a Chinese-born, U.S.-educated engineer, was a beneficiary of nepotism who began his spy work to pay the mortgage on his home in Boca Raton, Fla. And the agent who ran the sweeping international case botched so many details that in the end, only Mo was sentenced. Hvistendahl presents Mo as a pawn in America's rivalry with China. Unfortunately, "what this captivating book doesn't do is to say very much about what America's best course would be in the face of what is clearly a state-driven effort by China to vacuum up as much technology and know-how from the U.S. as it can."

"If there is a subplot that makes this book essential reading," said **Helen Anne Curry** in *ScienceMag.com*, "it is Hvistendahl's documentation of the disturbing effects that the too-vigorous pursuit of industrial spies has had on Chinese scientists and engineers in the United States." Most are not spies or potential spies, but many have been subjected to racial profiling. In fact, "wrongful investigations have ruined lives," and fear-mongering has cultivated race-based hostility and suspicion that is chasing talented immigrants away. "Is American industry really at risk? Or is it values such as tolerance, openness, and justice that are truly in danger?" Hvistendahl provides no easy answer, but her detailed and incisive book "will leave readers well equipped to arrive at their own conclusions."

Novel of the week

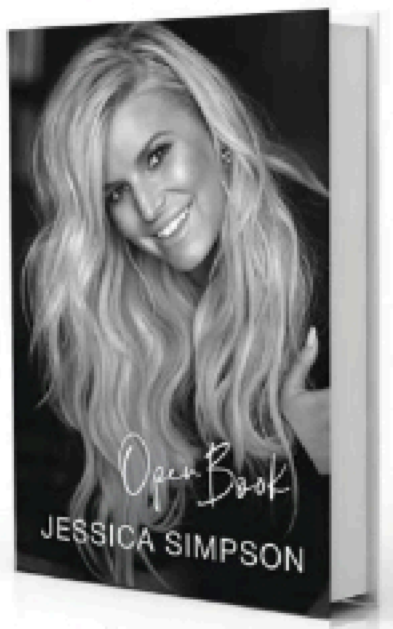
Tyll

by Daniel Kehlmann (Pantheon, $27)

"Like the legendary hero of this novel, Daniel Kehlmann is a trickster, an acrobat, a conjurer," said **Boyd Tonkin** in the ***Financial Times***. The Austrian-German author's latest work pulls the jester figure Tyll Ulenspiegel out of medieval folklore and plops him down amid the Thirty Years' War, a 17th-century Protestant-Catholic conflict that metastasized into a bloody scourge that killed millions. Tyll, after seeing his father hanged for sorcery, flees across a ravaged Germany, meeting zealots, musicians, and royalty, acquiring and shedding traveling mates, and eventually achieving a measure of renown. All along, Kehlmann's artistry "makes past and present, myth and history merge." Gradually, the purpose behind his choice of setting becomes clear, said **James Wood** in ***The New Yorker***. During the war that gave birth to modern Europe, authorities sought to control the very definition of the magical, but Tyll escapes their grasp. He is "the embodiment of fiction itself"—a figure "as reckless as the Devil and as selfless as Christ"; "just as he is about to be captured, he slips away to furnish another tale."

Open Book

by Jessica Simpson
(Dey Street, $29)



Jessica Simpson's new best-selling memoir has delivered plenty of fresh tabloid fodder, said **Emily Yahr** in *The Washington Post*. But judging the book solely by scanning the headlines it has generated is "a disservice to someone who has a truly unique story of fame to tell." Simpson was 19 when she became a pop star and 23 when MTV turned her private life and marriage to singer Nick Lachey into a popular reality show called *Newlyweds*. Noting that this made her a guinea pig for the coming era when every Instagram user began engaging in a performance of identity, she writes, "If my personal life was my work, and my work required me to play a certain role, who even was I anymore?" Coming from Simpson, "it's a passage that should send chills down the spines of aspiring influencers."

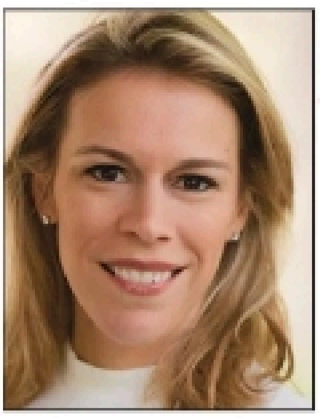
Simpson was held to impossible standards, said **Pier Dominguez** in *BuzzfeedNews.com*. Signed by Columbia Records at 17, she was immediately advised to lose 15 pounds to cinch her image as a sexy but virginal daughter of a Texas preacher. On *Newlyweds*, she played a ditz whose gaffes became media sensations. (And really, shouldn't there be chicken in a can of Chicken of the Sea?) She claims she exaggerated her silly side to sell records. But media scrutiny took a toll, leading to a prescription drug habit and, when she gained weight, serious body dysmorphia. Rumors about various passages in her life story, such as her shabby treatment by serial ex John Mayer, are here "canonized as fact," said **Seija Rankin** in *EW.com*. Simpson is less forthcoming about other subjects, such as whether she used a ghostwriter.

Still, "no one expected this level of lucidity from Simpson, and that's our fault," said **Maria Sherman** in *Jezebel.com*. Readers who once mocked her might feel remorse for unwittingly encouraging her demons. Here, though, "she never expresses anger, only forgiveness." At 39, Simpson has been sober for three years and has become a multimillionaire off her department store clothing line. That she can present herself today as an autonomous adult might be "the most intriguing revelation in a book full of them."

Getty

The Book List

Best books…chosen by Allison Pataki



Allison Pataki's new novel, The Queen's Fortune, *fictionalizes the life of Napoleon Bonaparte's first fiancée. Below, the best-selling author of* The Traitor's Wife *and* The Accidental Empress *recommends six other books that feature strong female voices.*

Cleopatra by Stacy Schiff (2010). Cleopatra was the most shrewd, alluring, and pragmatic female boss of antiquity, surviving attempts by her own family to murder her and then earning her place in history alongside Julius Caesar. Pulitzer Prize winner Schiff is ruthless in her revelatory rendering of the highly complex Queen of the Nile, presenting a life that turns Elizabeth Taylor's sultry, snake-wearing legend on its head.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813). If I must chose only a single Austen novel to include in this celebration of strong female voices, it has to be this one. Lizzy Bennet is beloved by readers everywhere because they relate to her independence, wit, and defiant authenticity.

Conjure Women by Afia Atakora (2020). Secrets, heartache, and healing fill this story spanning two generations of women living in the South before and after the Civil War. Atakora's writing grips you from the first page of this soon-to-be-published novel. It's no surprise that she is being hailed as a successor to Toni Morrison.

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion (2005). Didion's memoir helped me through some of the darkest days of my life, following my husband's stroke. If you've ever loved, lost, mourned, or simply lived as a human being, Didion's incisive words will hit their mark deep in your heart.

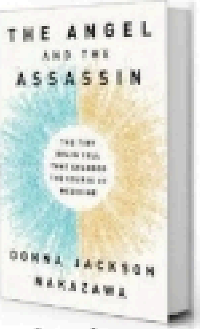
Pachinko by Min Jin Lee (2017). It took Lee almost 30 years to write this book, and thank goodness she followed through. The result is a stunning saga that follows four generations of a Korean family living in Japan. The writing is so poignant, I felt I could taste and smell the rich world the characters inhabit.

Circe by Madeline Miller (2018). Circe was a fabled goddess who led a solitary life of island exile, tossed back and forth between the gods and the mortals as it served their whims. She's often remembered merely as a tangential character in Odysseus' legend, but in this brilliant fictional reimagining, Miller puts Circe squarely in the center of her own story. Greek mythology has never been so enjoyable.

Also of interest…in sickness and in health

The Angel and the Assassin

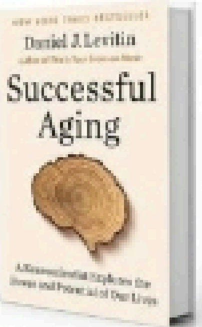
by Donna Jackson Nakazawa (Ballantine, $28)



Our growing understanding of a once ignored set of brain cells might just revolutionize medicine, said Emily Anthes in Salon.com. Journalist Donna Jackson Nakazawa "writes with refreshing clarity" about microglia, which previously were cast as merely the brain's cleanup crew and now appear central to how the immune system and brain interact. Nakazawa sometimes credits microglia with more than has yet been proved, but she "makes a compelling case" that the new thinking is transformational.

Successful Aging

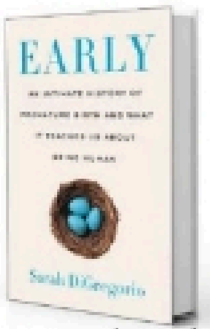
by Daniel J. Levitin (Dutton, $30)



"Deservedly a best-seller," this superb user's manual for aging bodies and minds has only one real flaw, said Paul Thagard in PsychologyToday.com. Its top recommendation is to not retire—and while that might be sensible advice for the author's peers in academia, no one should feel tied to overtaxing, unrewarding work. Trust neuroscientist Daniel Levitin on everything else, though. Whether he's damping worries about declining memory or offering diet tips, his recommendations are "largely tied to good evidence."

Early

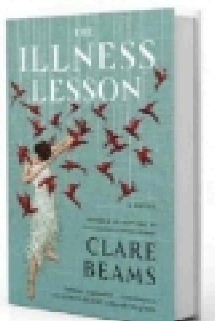
by Sarah DiGregorio (Harper, $29)



This fine study of the history of premature birth "opens like a medical thriller," said Randi Hutter Epstein in *The New York Times*. The author's daughter was born at just 1.5 pounds, and the efforts described here that save the child establish what has been at stake since a few U.S. doctors defied tradition in the 1960s and began trying to keep such newborns alive. Of course, "every advance brings with it new dilemmas," and Sarah DiGregorio is "such a beautiful storyteller" that you feel every one.

The Illness Lesson

by Clare Beams (Doubleday, $27)

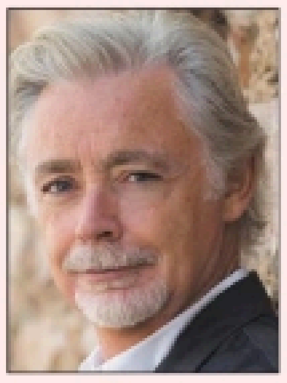


"Clare Beams' debut novel is part horror, part case study, and—I mean this as a compliment—part feminist polemic," said Sally Franson in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In 1870s Massachusetts, a prideful man starts a girls' school whose students soon appear afflicted by a mystery ailment. As the tale darkens, Beams glides gracefully atop "that thin ice in a good story where audience expectation gives way to well-imagined plausibility." The unease that gets under the girls' skin "also got under mine."

Tricia McCormack, Mary Browne

Author of the week

Eoin Colfer



Eoin Colfer's world just keeps growing, said **Niamh Donnelly** in ***The Irish Times***. The creator of Artemis Fowl, the titular 12-year-old outlaw hero of a series that has sold 25 million copies, initially planned just a trilogy, not eight books and the Disney movie due to arrive in May. But almost 20 years have passed since Artemis' debut, and Colfer, a former Irish schoolteacher, has never stopped spinning new tales. Before his global breakthrough, he had written two children's novels, at least one of which he considers just as good. "I never know which is going to be the one," he says. "Sometimes you hit that zeitgeist." Today, he's 54, and his tally sits at 43 books, including crime capers and graphic novels. He's also written musicals, plays, and now his first fantasy novel for adults.

Colfer's goofball outlandishness is on full display in *Highfire*, said **Gary Thompson** in ***The Philadelphia Inquirer***. Its story about a moonshine delivery boy in Louisiana's swamplands features both a crooked cop named after Captain Hook and a wisecracking sidekick who smokes and drinks as much as a 1930s detective. That sidekick also happens to be a dragon. "I've used the term 'dragon noir,'" says Colfer. "I've read the classic noir books, and I know I'm not going to do any better, so I figure I might as well do something different. Why not put a dragon in there?" He's hopeful that some original fans of *Artemis Fowl*, now grown, might cotton to *Highfire*. But no worries if they don't. "I kind of don't have to worry about whether I can afford to not make any money," he says. "I'm in a very nice position."

Review of reviews: Art & Music

Exhibit of the week

Sahel: Art and Empires on the Shores of the Sahara

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, through May 10

“If Africa’s Sahel region gets any press at all, it is usually bad,” said ***The Economist.*** The news reports tend to emphasize war, Islamist terrorism, poverty, and the threat that climate change poses to the population. But crisis was not always the chief export of the Sahel, which hugs the southern edge of the Sahara Desert and encompasses much of present-day Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Niger. Before and after the arrival of Muslim traders in the 7th century, it was a nexus of remarkable wealth, political dynamism, and artistry. That history is being honored at the Metropolitan Museum in New York by an exhibition that gathers 200 objects, many not previously seen together. Given the many challenges the Sahel faces today, “its complexities must be understood.”

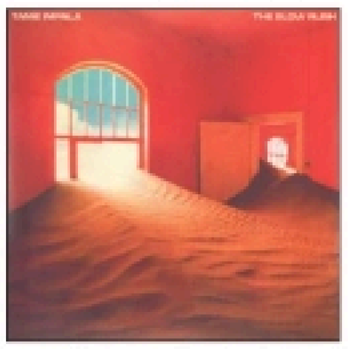
A wooden figure by an unknown Dogon artist

If the lesson is that the broad band of Africa lying south of the Sahara possesses a rich history, “the Met’s gorgeous show is the place to learn it,” said **Holland Cotter** in ***The New York Times.*** A 4,000-year-old sculpture is one of the first objects you’ll see, and it’s the size and shape of a pebble. Still, “with a few lightly incised tweaks, a resourceful artist has conjured an icon of procreative female power.” History unfolds from there, most pointedly in two facing lines of equestrian statues that span many cultures and centuries. A collection of 20 terra-cotta and wooden figures from the Niger River valley “form the visual and emotional heart of the show.” Produced in Djenné-Djeno not long before that ancient city was mysteriously abandoned in about 1400, they rank among “the most moving sculptures ever made.” Some are nearly abstract; others starkly realistic—and most were probably made by women. “In one, a figure of ambiguous gender presses its head to the earth as if in grief or prayer.”

Museums like the Met often present African art as if it had meaning only in relationship to European art, said **Philip Kennicott** in ***The Washington Post.*** This exhibition, by contrast, “lets the visitor exist within the Sahel on its own terms.” The region was for centuries the world’s main supplier of gold, and the skill of its goldsmiths is not overlooked. More strikingly, though, the work on view “has a curious sense of ease and settled composure,” suggestive of an enviable way of being that arose from notably non-Western ideas about gender dynamics and political cooperation. Consider the final gallery’s “astonishing” group of human and equestrian figures, made mostly in the 19th and 20th centuries by the Bamana people. All 10 figures are “quietly but insistently present, full of life but slightly remote too,” suggesting “a persistence of culture and place that transcends political entities.”

Tame Impala
The Slow Rush

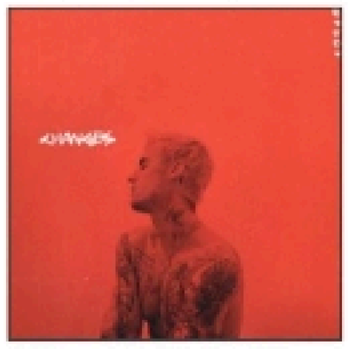
★★★☆



The fourth Tame Impala album is “shot through with the kind of grooves that dare you not to dance,” said **Jillian Mapes** in ***Pitchfork.com.*** Five years in the making, the follow-up to *Currents*, the record that catapulted Kevin Parker’s one-man psych-rock band to undreamed-of fame, is “an extraordinarily detailed opus whose influences reach into specific corners of the past six decades, from Philly soul and early prog to acid house, adult-contemporary R&B, and [Kanye West’s] *Late Registration*.” The Australian multi-instrumentalist has collaborated with West and Lady Gaga, among others. He has also headlined festivals with a live version of Tame Impala and gotten married, so he’s “decidedly more upbeat” even as he has trimmed his music’s share of adrenaline-filled highs. “A whole album of Parker’s distracted, reverb-laden falsetto can get a little too drifty, no matter how dazzling the musical experience,” said **Jon Dolan** in ***Rolling Stone.*** “As mood music, though, it’s a sweet trip. So sit back, relax, and have a swig—it’ll take the edge off.”

Justin Bieber
Changes

★★☆☆



“Romantic contentedness is no state of mind in which one should create works of art,” said **Jeremy Helligar** in ***Variety.*** That’s the clear implication of Justin Bieber’s new album, which finds the 25-year-old former child star mostly stringing together slow-jam and mid-tempo paeans to his new wife, Hailey Baldwin. As always, the boy can sing. In fact, the “blue-eyed soul stirrer” and tabloid bad boy “has never sounded better.” But “there’s something airless about the album.” Returning to recording after a rocky five years, he does seem content, but “what’s missing is joy.” *Changes* “plays to his interests more than his strengths,” said **Emma Garland** in ***Vice .com.*** “Each track is built on a simple hook or looping beat—often ditching the big pop choruses Justin’s so good at in favor of subtle melodies and lots of repetition.” He is “quite literally just vibing.” Though it includes “plenty of good beats,” *Changes*, in the end, “lands like love itself: easy to appreciate, but only significant when it’s happening to you.”

Moses Boyd
Dark Matter

★★★☆

This “staggering” solo debut from one of the stars of London’s hybrid jazz scene “melds multiple musical worlds in mind-blowing ways,” said **Robin Hilton** and **Stephen Thompson** in ***NPR.org.*** Moses Boyd, a young drummer, bandleader, and producer, makes genre-fluid, dance floor–friendly music that’s as indebted to grime, house, and other electronica as it is to jazz. Just listen to the skittering beats, echoing synths, and brawny tuba that propel “Stranger Than Fiction.” You’ll also hear Afro-Caribbean influences on *Dark Matter*, “a rich pastiche of electro-acoustic textures with a special composite power,” said **Giovanni Russonello** in ***NYTimes.com.*** Throughout, Boyd brings to mind Afrobeat legend Tony Allen with drum patterns “as open and rolling as they are forceful.” The vocalists who sit in on a few tracks “actually struggle to add to the lyricism on offer,” said **Kitty Empire** in ***The Observer*** (U.K.). The true highlight is “2 Far Gone,” an instrumental on which keyboardist Joe Armon-Jones “arpeggiates magnificently” over a house beat.

Hughes Dubois/Archives Fondation Dapper

Emma.

Directed by Autumn de Wilde

(PG)

★★★☆

A wealthy young woman plays matchmaker.

The new adaptation of Jane Austen's 1815 classic comedy of errors isn't exactly a modernization, said **Danny Leigh** in the ***Financial Times***. It is instead "tradition styled for the modern palate," with a winking theatricality established by wedding cake visuals "as crisp and careful as the tableaux of Wes Anderson." Fittingly, Anya Taylor-Joy plays Emma Woodhouse "with the bright expressive clarity of an emoji." As she commandeers the romantic life of lower-born Harriet Smith (Mia Goth), Emma is first carefree, then snotty, then lovestruck. Some casting choices work less well, said **Peter Bradshaw** in ***TheGuardian.com***. Josh O'Connor is ill-suited to play the vain clergyman Emma hopes to pair with Harriet. But Bill Nighy nails the role of Emma's fussy father, Johnny Flynn makes a virile Mr. Knightley, and the movie generally contents itself with being "genial and interestingly unassuming." We do get a fresh take on Emma from Taylor-Joy, said **Robert Abele** in ***TheWrap.com.*** "Haughty and headstrong," she's almost unlikable until her veneer cracks. Despite the story's warnings against playing Cupid, this edition provides proof that "bringing a timeless book and fresh talent together is still a worthy kind of artistic matchmaking."

Taylor-Joy's snotty Cupid

Ordinary Love

Directed by Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn

(R)

★★★☆

A contented couple are tested by cancer.

Lesley Manville "finds ways to wordlessly express emotions one might have thought were inexpressible," said **Kenneth Turan** in the ***Los Angeles Times***. The veteran actress has never been better than she is here, playing opposite a "superb" Liam Neeson in a quiet drama about a loving couple enduring the trials of a cancer diagnosis and the year of treatments, side effects, and setbacks to follow. "The worse things get, the more compelling *Ordinary Love* becomes," and Manville, with her face alone, "tells us everything we need to know." Still, the story here is so streamlined that "you may also wish there were more," said **A.O. Scott** in ***The New York Times***. The couple seem to have no life outside the present crisis, and though an attempt is made to show how the loneliness of illness threatens to turn even perfect allies into adversaries, the screenplay conveys this too politely, "casting a restrained hush over potentially unruly emotions." This is a film, though, that's "as thoughtfully composed as a Dutch master's painting," said **Leslie Felperin** in ***The Hollywood Reporter***. Full of "remorselessly honest" moments, it reminds us that even when the stakes feel highest, life itself doesn't really change. "That basic paradox gets to the very heart of how we survive, a lesson told with the lightest of touches in this ineffably beautiful film."

Neeson and Manville's easy chemistry

Beanpole

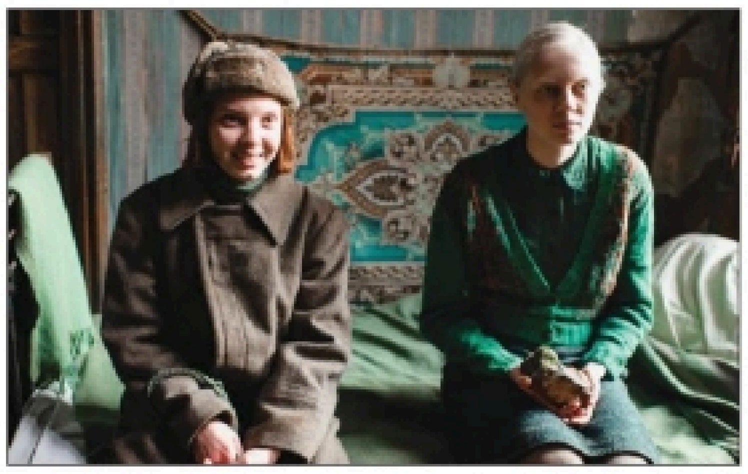
Directed by Kantemir Balagov

(R)

★★★★

Two Soviet women battle postwar traumas.

Watching this "slow, ferocious, and extraordinary" Russian drama, "you often have to remind yourself to breathe," said **Jessica Kiang** in ***Variety***. Set in Leningrad in World War II's aftermath, *Beanpole* tells a bleak but "deeply compelling" story about two women who embody the ruin that war can visit upon an entire nation's psyche. The title refers to Iya, a tall, lanky nurse at a soldiers' hospital who experiences seizures stemming from traumas she suffered as an anti-aircraft gunner. After a shocking new tragedy, she reconnects with a friend and fellow veteran, the volatile Masha, said **Joe Morgenstern** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. Both women are "struggling frantically, even madly, to survive and heal themselves," and shy Iya would do anything for Masha. What's "flat-out astonishing" is that both co-stars, Viktoria Miroshnichenko and Vasilisa Perelygina, have no previous experience as film actors; their performances are "as phenomenal as they are unforgettable." Perelygina embodies the character of Masha "with the feral energy of a wounded shark that's picked up the scent of its own blood," said **David Ehrlich** in ***IndieWire.com.*** By the end, there's "resonant beauty" to how these women reclaim a sense of purpose.



Perelygina and Miroshnichenko

The Call of the Wild's uncanny canine

The genial new family-friendly adaptation of *The Call of the Wild* has "only one glaring shortcoming," said **Maureen Lee Lenker** in ***EW.com.*** Its canine hero, Buck, is not a real dog but a computer-generated animation that is meant to look real enough as we follow his journey from family pet to abused but resilient member of a Yukon sled team. Granted, "Buck is an adorable creature." But every time I got close to falling in love with him, "the dead feeling behind his eyes got in the way." No doubt you've heard of "the uncanny valley" occupied by digital humans, said **Brian Truitt** in ***USA Today***. "This is the uncanny doghouse," and not even a lovably gruff Harrison Ford can make you forget the fakery. *The Call of the Wild* wants to posit that dogs are a man's best friend, but it's also "a great reminder that there's nothing like the real thing."

Focus Features, Bleecker Street, Kino Lorber, 20th Century Fox

Television

Movies on TV

Monday, Feb. 24

Two Women

Sophia Loren won an Oscar playing an Italian mother who tries in vain to protect her daughter from World War II's traumas. (1961) *8 p.m., TCM*

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure

Keanu Reeves set the course of his early career by playing half of a time-traveling stoner duo in a teen-comedy classic. (1989) *6:30 p.m., Movieplex*

Wednesday, Feb. 26

Forrest Gump

Tom Hanks plays a pure-hearted, simpleminded American whose journey through 20th-century U.S. history convinced many that life is a box of chocolates. (1994) *6:35 p.m., Starz*

Thursday, Feb. 27

The Age of Innocence

Daniel Day-Lewis and Michelle Pfeiffer co-star in Martin Scorsese's lush adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel set in Gilded Age New York. (1993) *5:40 p.m., Epix*

Friday, Feb. 28

The Kingmaker

Imelda Marcos, former first lady of the Philippines, serves as our unreliable narrator in a fascinating documentary focused on her recent political machinations. (2019) *9 p.m., Showtime*

Saturday, Feb. 29

Oh, God!

John Denver and George Burns make a surprisingly effective duo in Carl Reiner's comedy about a supermarket clerk who is visited by God in the form of a wisecracking elderly man. (1977) *10:15 p.m., TCM*

Sunday, March 1

Girl, Interrupted

Oscar-winner Angelina Jolie and Winona Ryder co-star as two teenagers who become friends while held in a psychiatric ward. (1999) *8 p.m., the Movie Channel*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Black in Space: Breaking the Color Barrier

Shortly after Russia put the first man in space in 1961, a plan was developed to ensure that the first black man in space would be an American. Air Force pilot Ed Dwight Jr. got the call, and in this eye-opening documentary, the story of his four years as the face of that effort launches a decades-long account of a less widely remembered space race that the Soviet Union finally won in 1980, three years before U.S. *Challenger* crew member Guion Bluford Jr. finally achieved Dwight's dream. *Monday, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m., Smithsonian*

American Masters: Miles Davis—Birth of the Cool

No biography of Miles Davis should be quite this square. But *Birth of the Cool* did earn a Grammy nomination, and its almost comprehensive account of the jazz legend's life and boundary-pushing career is packed with gripping commentary by ex-sidemen and ex-wives about his genius, his cruelty, his violence toward women, his drug abuse, and his subjection to racism. *Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

The 10th Democratic Debate

All eyes will be on South Carolina when the remaining contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination meet once more. A week is a lifetime in politics, of course, but we predict a lot will need to be settled on the Charleston stage—including which moderate deserves to own that lane heading toward Super Tuesday and whether Elizabeth Warren can remain a viable challenger to Bernie Sanders for command of the party's progressive wing. *Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 8 p.m., CBS*

I Am Not Okay With This

Two of the teen stars of the horror smash *It* have landed another worthy project. Created by the producers of *Stranger Things* and based on a graphic novel by the author of *The End of the F***ing World*, this new series casts Sophia Lillis as Sydney, an awkward teen in a Rust Belt town. Sydney is crushing on a boy and also crushing on her best friend when she discovers she has telekinetic powers that manifest at the worst moments. Sofia Bryant and Wyatt Oleff, one of Lillis' fellow Losers Club alums, co-star. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Feb. 26, Netflix*

Fanning and Smith in All the Bright Places

All the Bright Places

Is this the golden age of tragic teen romances on TV? In this strong feature-length adaptation of an acclaimed YA novel by Jennifer Niven, Elle Fanning co-stars opposite Justice Smith as a grieving high schooler who is rescued from her dark thoughts by a classmate who talks her into exploring the wonders of their home state, Indiana. But his generous efforts can only obscure his own struggles for so long. *Available for streaming Friday, Feb. 28, Netflix*

Other highlights

It's Personal With Amy Hoggart

Hoggart, a *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee* correspondent, goes solo with a show in which she tries to solve the personal problems of real, everyday Americans. *Wednesday, Feb. 26, at 10 p.m., truTV*

RuPaul's Drag Race

Nicki Minaj helps kick off Season 12 of the Emmy Award–winning reality competition hosted by America's most famous drag queen. *Friday, Feb. 28, at 8 p.m., VH1*

The Widower

An acclaimed three-part British series dramatizes the story of a Scot who established a pattern of marrying and murdering. *Sunday, March 1, at 8 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Segel opens a Pandora's box.

Show of the week

Dispatches From Elsewhere

Jason Segel, last seen on TV in *How I Met Your Mother*, has created a puzzle-box series with grand ambitions. Segel plays a bored data pusher who seeks to inject more magic into his life by hiring the services of a firm called the Jejune Institute. But when he discovers the institute might be running a sinister game, he finds three unlikely allies to pursue the truth. Episode 1 overplays its quirkiness, but the central mystery feels worth chasing in the company provided by Segel, Sally Field, Outkast's André 3000, and newcomer Eve Lindley, a trans love interest. *Sunday, March 1, at 10 p.m., AMC*

Netflix, AMC

• *All listings are Eastern Time.*

A Viet-Cajun seafood boil: Time to tie on your plastic bibs

"Vietnamese food has come a long way since my family came to America in 1975," says Andrea Nguyen in *Vietnamese Food Any Day* (Ten Speed Press). Consider this dish, now served by popular franchises from the West Coast to Houston and all along the Gulf Coast. Wherever it began, it reflects a talent that Viet cooks have for incorporating new ingredients and ideas. The makings of a traditional Southern seafood boil are tossed in garlic, spices, and butter, then doused with *muối tiêu chanh*—salt, black pepper, and lime juice. "It's a fun way to nosh," creating a messy communal feast "fueled by conversation and beer."

Recipe of the week

Viet-Cajun seafood boil

1 lb "new" potatoes
1 head garlic
2 tbsp plus 1¼ tsp Old Bay seasoning
Fine sea salt
1 orange or lemon
3 ears corn, husked and cut crosswise
6 tbsp butter
¾ tsp cayenne pepper
8 oz andouille or kielbasa sausage, cut into 1½- to 2-inch chunks
1⅓ lbs extra-large shrimp, snipped along back of shell with scissors and deveined
10 oz mussels
¾ tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 or 2 limes, cut into wedges

Swap in crab or crayfish if you have them.

In an 8-quart stockpot, combine potatoes, garlic, 12 cups water, 2 tbsp Old Bay, and 1 tsp salt. Set over high heat.

Finely grate the orange or lemon zest directly into a saucepan. Set aside.

Halve the orange or lemon and squeeze juice into stockpot. Cover pot and bring to a boil. Uncover and boil until potatoes are half-cooked, 8 to 10 minutes.

Remove garlic head from pot and let it cool a few minutes. Add corn to pot, return water to boil, and cook until potatoes are tender, 3 to 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, trim the root end from the garlic and slip the skins off the cloves. Chop and mash garlic with a knife and add to saucepan containing the zest. Add butter, cayenne, and remaining 1¼ tsp Old Bay. Cook over medium-low heat for about 2 minutes. Set aside to cool.

When corn and potatoes are cooked through, add sausage and shrimp to the boil, then top with the mussels. Cover pot and let shellfish poach about 2 minutes, until mussels have opened and shrimp have turned pink. Remove pot from heat, uncover, and stir 2 to 3 tbsp cooking liquid into the garlic butter.

Set a large colander in the sink and pour in boiled ingredients to drain. Return half the drained ingredients to the pot, pour in half the garlic butter, stir to coat, then dump onto a rimmed baking sheet. Repeat with the rest of the boil. Combine black pepper and 1 tsp salt and divide among individual small dishes. Bring the boil to the table. Invite diners to make their own sauce by squeezing juice from the lime wedges over the salt and pepper and stirring them together. Serves 4 to 6.

Downtown Los Angeles: Gateway to America's best food city?

Hayato's Brandon Go

We're through touting our turf as one of the most exciting food cities in America, said Patricia Escárcega and Bill Addison in the *Los Angeles Times.* Given the "wondrous complexity" of its culinary scene, L.A. now deserves the title of America's very best food city. And there's no better place to start exploring than downtown—where the flowering began about a decade ago. Our recent ranking of L.A.'s 101 best restaurants puts these three spots in the top 10.

Sonoratown It's arguably fitting that our favorite destination downtown is a counter-service taqueria whose house tortillas "raise the tortilla batting average for the entire city." One co-owner drives five hours every time the Mexican flour runs low, while her partner focuses on the mesquite-grilled beef and a menu that's "helping to restore the historic primacy of northern Mexican cooking in Los Angeles." *208 E. 8th St., (213) 628-3710*

Centenoplex The name refers to a handful of restaurants that chef Josef Centeno has created roughly at the intersection of West 4th Street and South Main, anchored by Bäco Mercat, his Mediterranean-inspired flagship. But don't overlook Bar Amá, "the California embassy for Tex-Mex cuisine," or Orsa & Winston, his 32-seat tasting-menu restaurant that brilliantly merges Italian and Japanese cooking.

Hayato For the "world-class dining experience" offered at this seven-seat counter at the Row DTLA complex, you'll need to chase reservations far in advance. Every night, chef Brandon Hayato Go takes "exhilarating liberties" with the Japanese *kaiseki* tradition, and his diners turn "nearly silly from the elation of an astounding meal." *Row DTLA, 1320 E. 7th St., (213) 395-0607*

Wine: Low-alcohol options

"Wine doesn't need to have a lot of alcohol to taste good," said Elin McCoy in Bloomberg.com. New Zealand now leads the world in naturally produced wines with less than 10 percent alcohol, and the wine club Dry Farm Wines specializes in finding others. You can track down your own by looking to any cool-climate region and to grapes with low sugar content.

FRV 100 Rosé ($20). A "vibrant, fruity" pét-nat rosé from a star Beaujolais winemaker, this gamay sparkler gets its name from a French play on "effervescent."

NV Broadbent Vinho Verde ($8). This "zippy" Portuguese white is "ideal with shrimp or scallops." It offers 9 percent ABV, floral aromas, and flavors of green plants and lime.

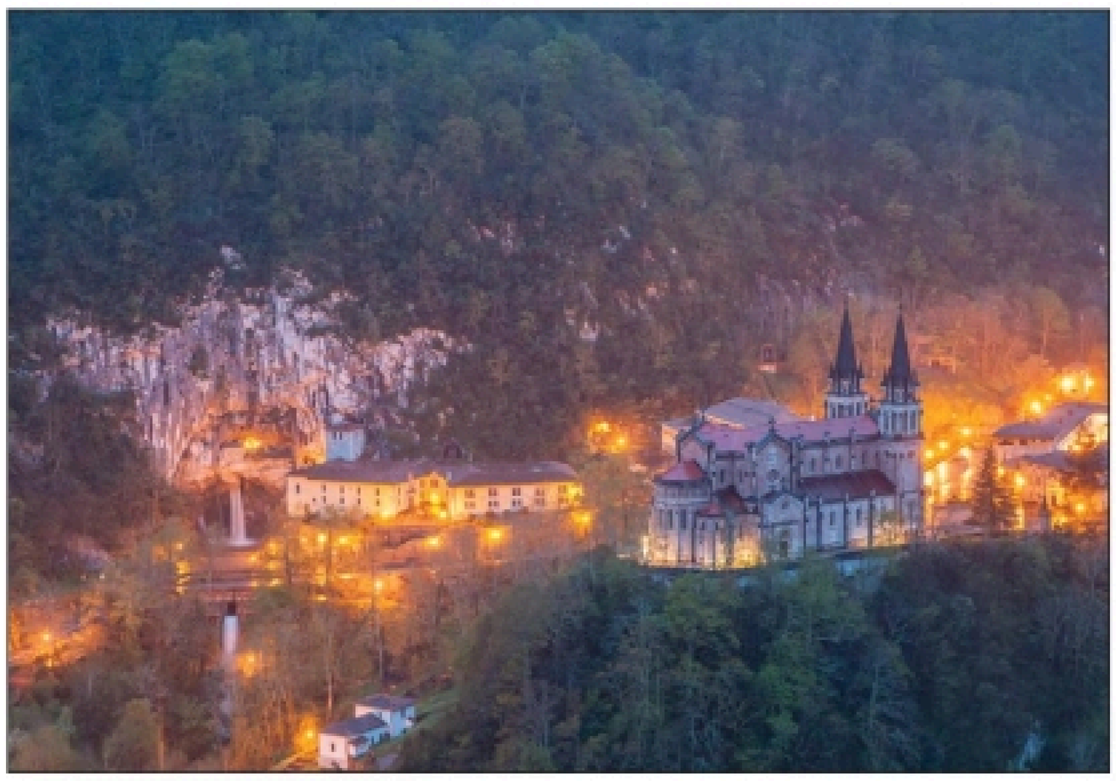
2018 G.D. Vajra Moscato d'Asti ($17). A sparkling moscato that's "always one of Piedmont's best," this 5.5 percent ABV wine combines fruit blossom aromas with "semisweet, luscious ripe fruit flavors."

BROADBENT
VINHO VERDE

Aubrie Pick, Mariah Tauger/Los Angeles Times

Travel

This week’s dream: Discovering Asturias, ‘the cradle of Spain’



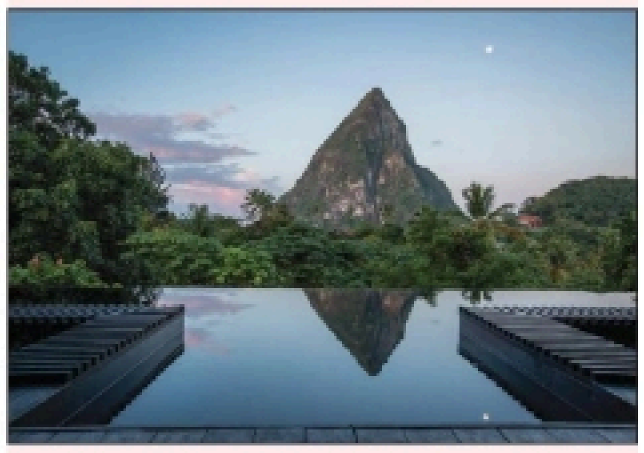
The basilica at Covadonga

Asturias, an autonomous region on Spain’s northern coast, is “a land all its own,” said **Bruce Schoenfeld** in ***National Geographic Traveler***. On my most recent visit, I drove north into Asturias from Madrid, and from the moment I passed through the Negrón Tunnel, “what I was seeing looked more like Ireland than Spain.” Behind me were hours of brown mesa. Ahead, the highway “curved through a valley rimmed with tall pines.” And Asturias, which was largely overlooked until Woody Allen made a 2008 movie in which three beautiful stars weekended in the capital, Oviedo, packs a lot into an area smaller than Connecticut. In Oviedo, known for its wealth of pre-Romanesque architecture, I visit Santa María del Naranco one day, and I have the 9th-century palace-church complex—and its grand hilltop views—almost to myself.

“Asturias’ two largest cities are polar opposites.” Whereas Oviedo “tends to be insular, conservative, and overtly polite,” nearby Gijón is a working-class port that’s “occasionally profane but open to the sea and new ideas.” In Gijón, I enjoy an avant-garde jazz festival as well as my stop at the Museum of the Asturian People. Outside the cities lies the Tito Bustillo Cave, home to a 30,000-year-old painting, as well as the so-called cradle of Spain, Covadonga, a breathtaking site where the Visigoth nobleman Pelagius halted the advance of the Moors in 718. On my way north, a flock of sheep creates a traffic jam. “I park and walk into the nearby brush, inhaling air so fresh that it sends a jolt of sharpness into my chest. All I hear is the din of the sheep bells.”

Some people visit Asturias just for the food, even for one meal at Casa Marcial, a restaurant in the mountain village of La Salgar. I manage to join a celebration of the restaurant’s 25th anniversary that’s drawn many Spanish chefs. The food—ham, roasted rabbit, bean stews, sea urchins, razor clams, and sea cucumbers—“unites the coast and peaks of this northern Spanish province.” At about the seventh course, I realize “this is a meal I could eat nowhere else.”
At 3 Cabos (hotelrural3cabos.com), a coastal guesthouse, doubles start at $95.

Hotel of the week



The view from the pool

Boucan by Hotel Chocolat

Soufrière, St. Lucia

Set on a Caribbean cocoa plantation, this resort “makes agriculture seem almost sexy,” said Christian Wright in *The New York Times*. Hotel Chocolat, a U.K. chocolatier, rejuvenated the local cocoa industry after it bought the land in 2006, and the luxury complex they’ve built offers spectacular views of Petit Piton from the restaurant and infinity pool. The guest lodges “have a kind of modern colonial air, with dark wood floors and four-poster beds.” Shuttles run to the beaches, but visitors can also tour the cocoa groves and, starting this summer, “learn hands-on about how fine chocolate is made.”
hotelchocolat.com; lodges from $551

Getting the flavor of...

Alaska’s ice-carving championships

In Fairbanks, ice sculpture is both an art form and a sport, said Jennifer Nalewicki in *SmithsonianMag.com*. Each year, 11,000 spectators flock to the city in central Alaska to watch artists from around the world saw and chisel slabs of ice into “gallery-worthy” masterpieces. To stage the World Ice Art Championships—held this year from Feb. 15 through March 31—volunteers first harvest 4 million pounds of ice from a local pond, hauling 3,500-pound blocks that are also used, before the competition begins, to construct a stage and several slides. The gemlike aquamarine ice is so clear that it’s known as Arctic diamond, and the 100 or so competing sculptors carve it into the most intricate forms—dragons and octopuses, perhaps, or even the tea-party scene from *Alice in Wonderland*. Working outdoors for days, the artists give all to art that melts away. “They are truly living in the moment,” says event coordinator Heather Taggard.

Arkansas’ historic hot springs

I never understood the appeal of a warm bath until I visited Hot Springs, Ark., said Christine Dell’Amore in *The Washington Post*. History was what drew me to the small city that grew up around the federally protected waters that became Hot Springs National Park. Now a city of 35,000, Hot Springs once resembled Las Vegas; during its 1880–1950 heyday, it was a resort town with brothels, cocaine dens, and gambling houses clustered around its elegant bathhouses. The city’s decline began when people realized that the mineral-rich waters didn’t cure many ailments. But the beautiful stone buildings that line Bathhouse Row have been restored and now house a luxury hotel, an art gallery, and a modern spa. Al Capone, I learned, used to “take the waters” at the grand Arlington Hotel, where I was scrubbed with a loofah, wrapped in hot towels, and left to enjoy a lavender-scented soak. “Aha, I thought: Now I get it.”

Last-minute travel deals

A leap year special

Book a room at an Archer hotel on Feb. 29 and save 29 percent on stays through February of next year. The hotel chain’s boutique properties include locations in Austin, Napa, and New York, where discounted rates would start at $156.
archerhotel.com

Trek the Silk Road

Readers of *The Week* can enjoy an exclusive 10 percent discount on Silk Road adventures with Wild Frontiers Travel. For example, the 10-day “Across the Kazakh Steppe” package would start at $2,770. Book by March 1. Mention code “Wild Silk Road.”
(877) 454-3672

Springtime on the Rhine

Voted the best river cruise line by readers of *Condé Nast Traveler*, Crystal Cruises is offering two-for-one fares on select European river voyages booked by March 4. One weeklong cruise from Amsterdam to Basel now starts at $3,949 a person.
crystalcruises.com

Alamy

The 2020 Toyota Highlander: What the critics say

A worthier sales leader, from $34,600

Autoweek

A new edition of America's favorite three-row SUV has arrived, and it's "everything you loved and more." The fourth generation of Toyota's family hauler rides on a new platform that adds 3 inches of second-row legroom. The new Highlander also has more standard features, conveys a more premium feel in its higher trims, and rates as "one of the best-looking utilities to roll out of a Toyota design studio."

TheDrive.com

The standard engine, a 295-hp V-6, is "more than adequate" for everyday driving. Even so, "you're gonna want the hybrid." Nearly 30 percent more efficient than its predecessor, the new hybrid, paired with all-wheel drive, achieves "a seriously admirable" 35 mpg in combined highway and city driving. In any configuration, this 2020 also "moves competently for its size."

Autoblog.com

"The new Highlander is not going to blow anyone's mind, and that's not the point." This is instead a "comfortable, capable, and impressively efficient" vehicle that "offers a lot to a lot of people." Sure, it still has one of segment's tightest third rows and offers only average cargo space, despite a modest increase. But it nicely balances drivability and utility and throws in a fair amount of technology. "It may not be incredible, but it is enjoyable."

The best of...espresso machines

De'Longhi EC155

If you want a mere step up from a stove-top pot, look to De'Longhi, a household name in Italy. Though mostly plastic, this affordable machine applies 15 bars of pressure—rare at this price point but a must for true espresso.

$82, homedepot.com

Source: BusinessInsider.com

Rancilio Silvia

Known to fans as Ms. Silvia, this classic semi-automatic machine is the gold standard for home espresso makers. "She's a bit like a strong-willed Italian lady: Treat her with respect, and she'll reward you with thick, textured espresso shots."

$715, wholelattelove.com

Source: CoffeeChronicler.com

Gaggia Classic Pro

Ms. Silvia's longtime rival is easier to master for novice baristas. Though it has trouble frothing milk as well as a Breville, the Gaggia consistently yields shots of "surprising complexity."

$449, wholelattelove.com

Source: TheWirecutter.com

Breville Barista Express

This sharply designed stainless steel machine has a built-in burr grinder and a pressure gauge like those on commercial models. It pulls "full-flavored, densely textured" shots, and it makes foam that's velvety enough for latte art.

$700, breville.com

Source: Epicurious.com

Espressione Concierge

Machines that require grinding and loading the coffee offer better control over flavor, but this fully automatic option is "the epitome of convenience." It brews a decent shot at the push of a button.

$600, surlatable.com

Source: TomsGuide.com

Tip of the week...

Five uses for silica gel packets

■ **In your gym bag:** The silica gel packets that are tucked in with many consumer products are there to absorb moisture, so put them back to work. Slipped into a gym bag, they'll reduce the dampness from sweat-soaked clothes, taming the growth of odor-causing bacteria.

■ **In the pantry:** Keep packets on the shelves where you store spices, grains, and other dry staples, and even near vegetables such as potatoes and onions.

■ **In the medicine cabinet:** It's always hard to dry a razor thoroughly, so store yours alongside a silica packet or two to extend the life of the blades.

■ **In a jewelry box:** Silver tarnishes because of moisture, and silica can slow that process.

■ **In the attic:** Photos should always be stored with silica packets. Silica can even eliminate the musty smell of old books, given a month or more in a closed plastic bin.

Source: Lifehacker.com

And for those who have everything...

That pricey new apple at your supermarket is more than a product of marketing. With the **Cosmic Crisp**, "for once, the hype is real": Horticulturists truly have developed a virtually perfect apple. These Washington-grown wonders are "almost impossibly crispy," with "a sweet, strong, fruity flavor that's tempered by lots of acidity." And they combine great taste with "glorious good looks," a long shelf life, and a stubborn resistance to browning. Credit a 40-year project launched by a Washington State University professor, who achieved the breakthrough by crossing a Honeycrisp with an Enterprise. Prices will remain high until a larger crop arrives next fall.

COSMIC CRISP
3507

$42 for four, thefruitcompany.com

Source: PopSci.com

Best apps...

To use on a ski trip

■ **Liftopia** simplifies the search for good deals on lift tickets. The online marketplace offers discounted day passes from hundreds of resorts worldwide, plus discounts on hotel stays, rental equipment, and meals.

■ **SkiLynx** makes it easy to keep tabs on friends (or your children) as they ski and ride lifts around the mountain. The $3 app uses GPS to track and share locations. It can also map the runs you've taken and log your downhill mileage.

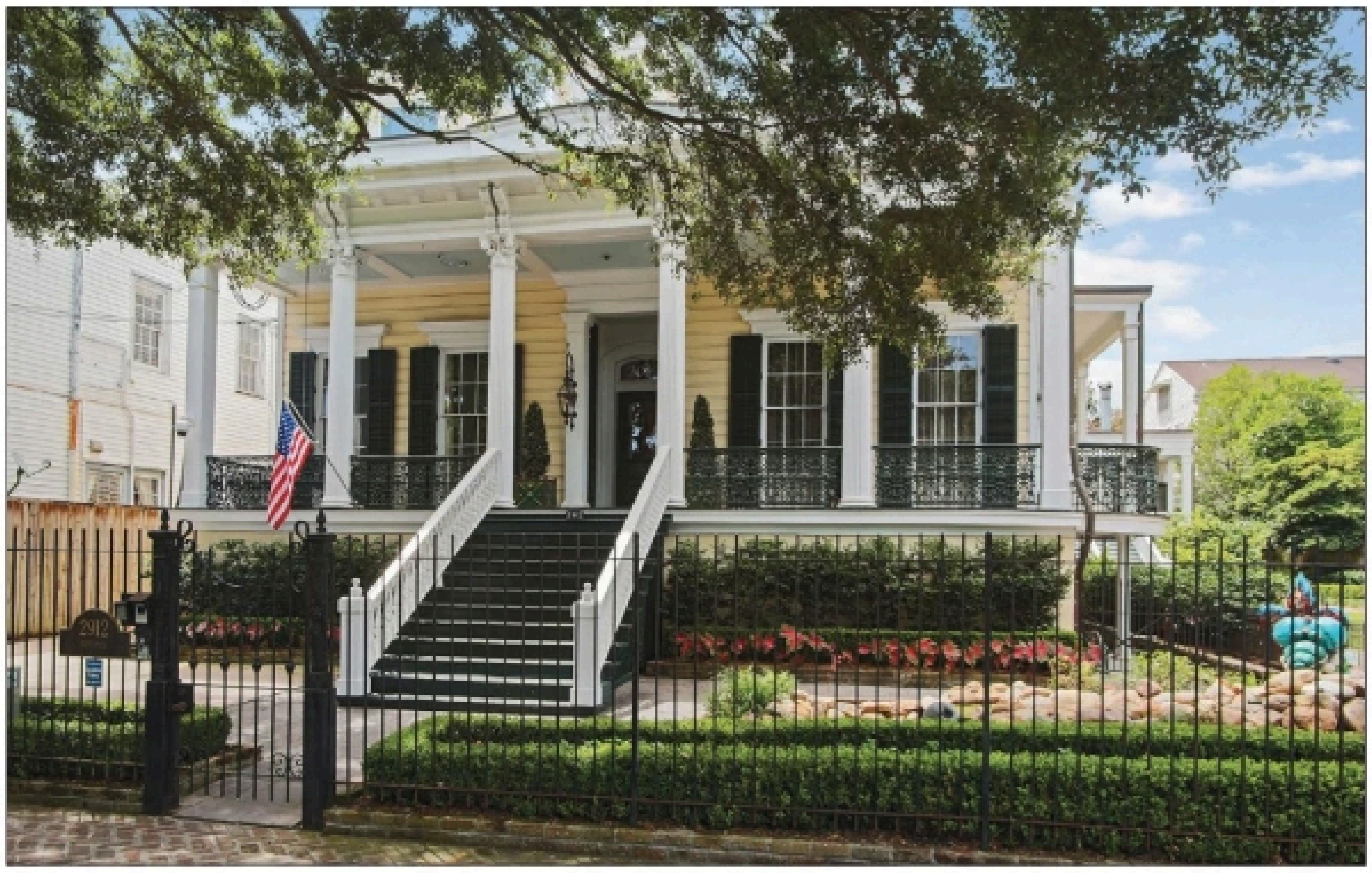
■ **Snocru** measures stats like speed, altitude, and slope steepness, which you can share in posts for other nearby SnowCru users. The app also provides smart updates on weather and snowfall.

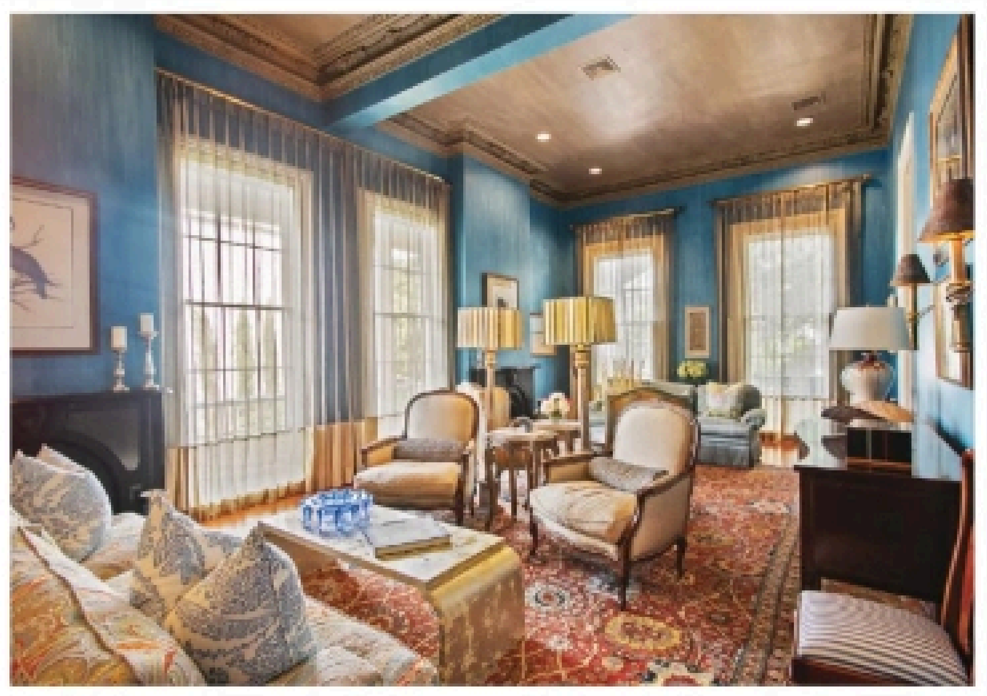
■ **Carv** is designed to pair with a $300 pair of sensors that slide into your ski boots. The app tracks 35 metrics—including your stance, edging, and turn symmetry—while an AI instructor coaches you in real time.

Source: The Wall Street Journal

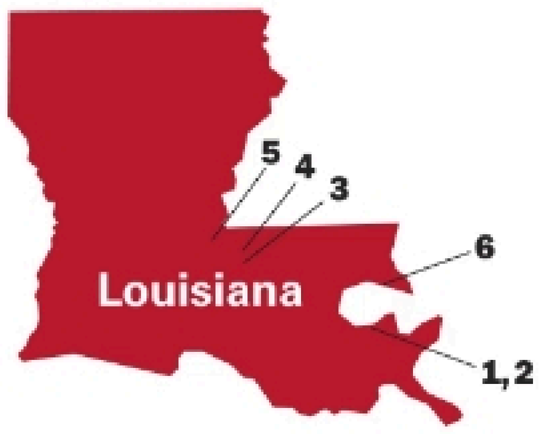
Best properties on the market

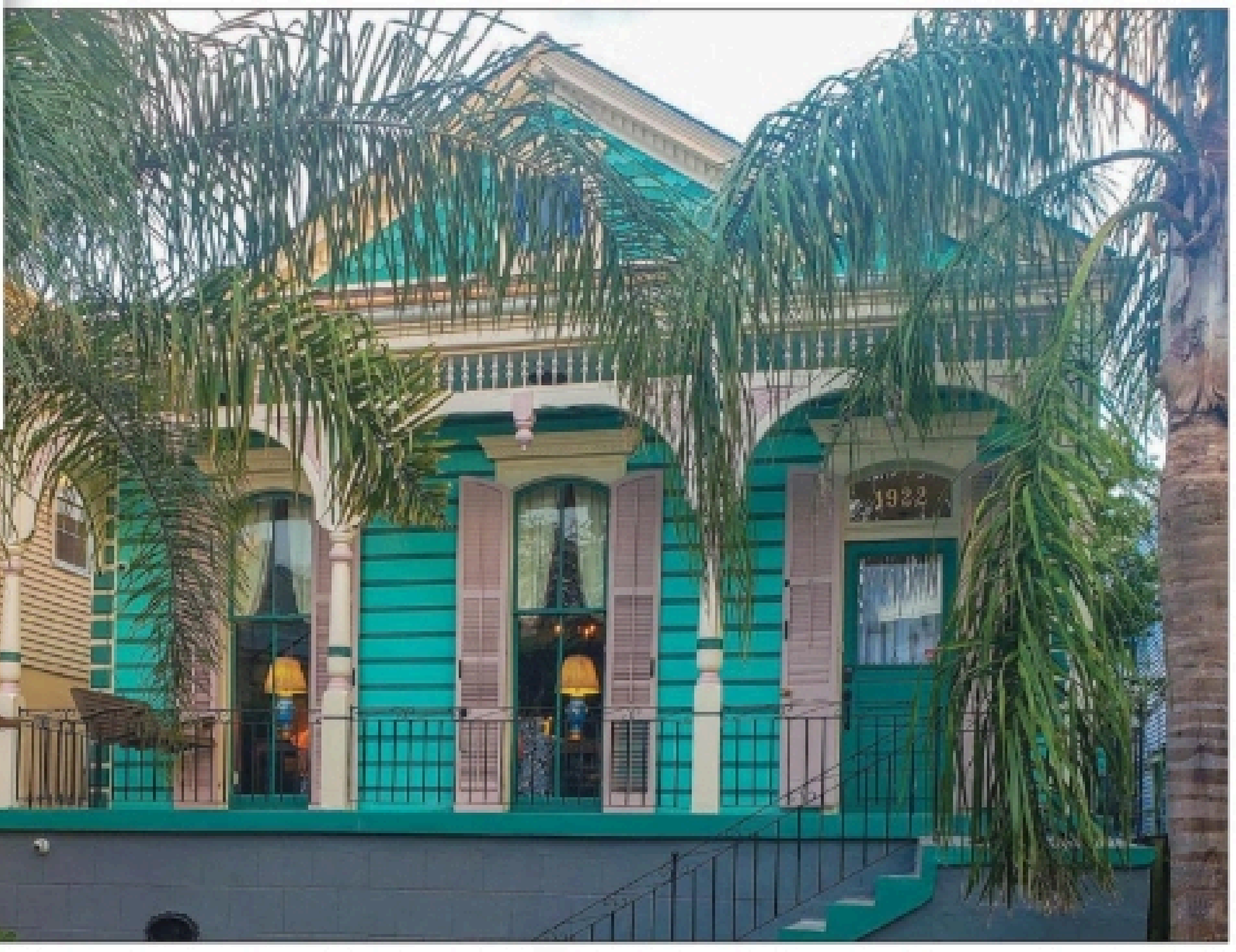
This week: Homes in Louisiana





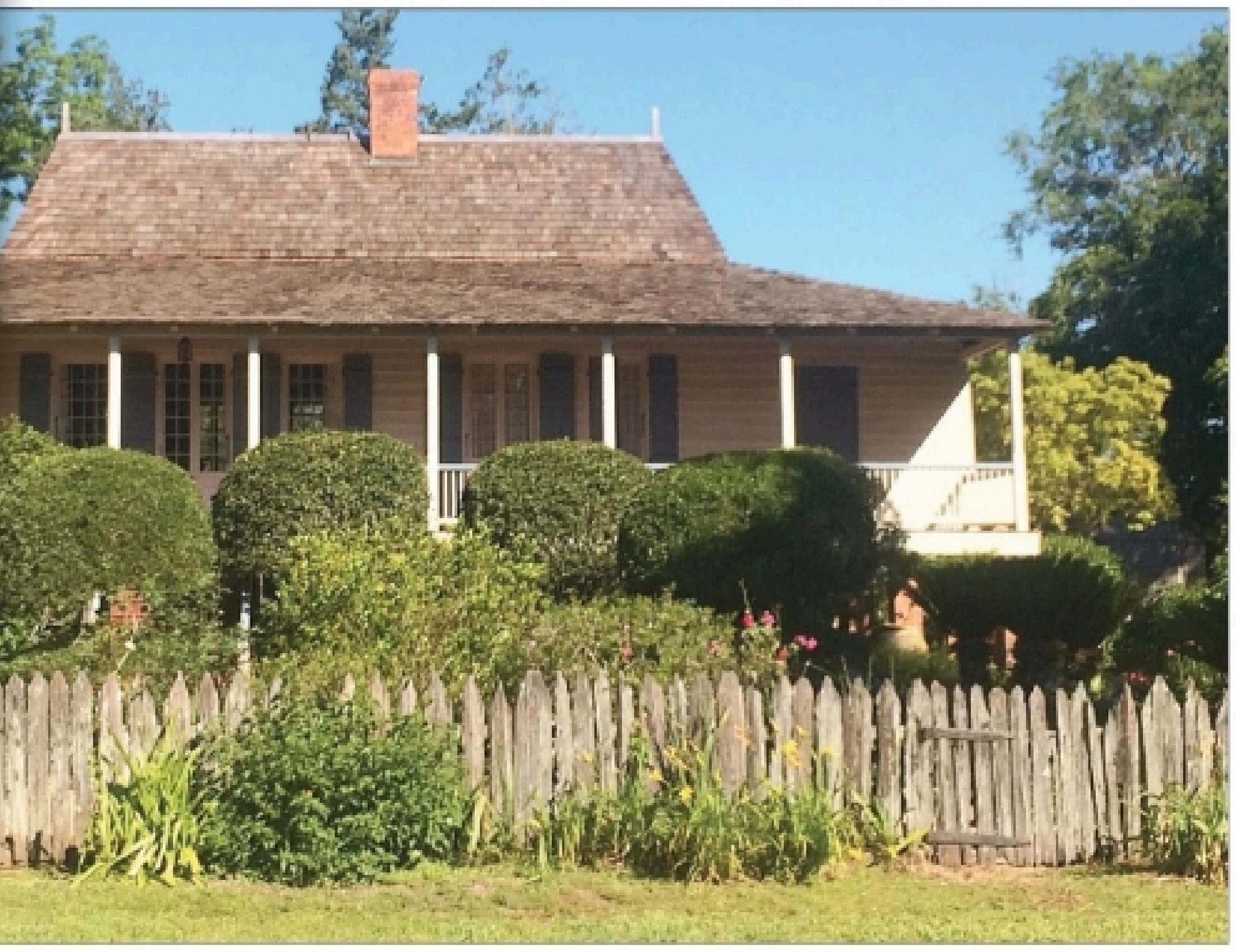
1 ◀ New Orleans Built in 1850, this five-bedroom home stands on a double lot in the historic Garden District. A 2012 renovation gave it an award-winning kitchen, a master suite with spa bathroom, and a wine cellar and tasting lounge, while preserving original details, including an ornate carved ceiling. A wraparound porch leads out to gardens, a dining area with a grill, a patio with a pool, and parking for five cars. $3,500,000. Anne Comarda, Engel & Völkers, (504) 251-1020

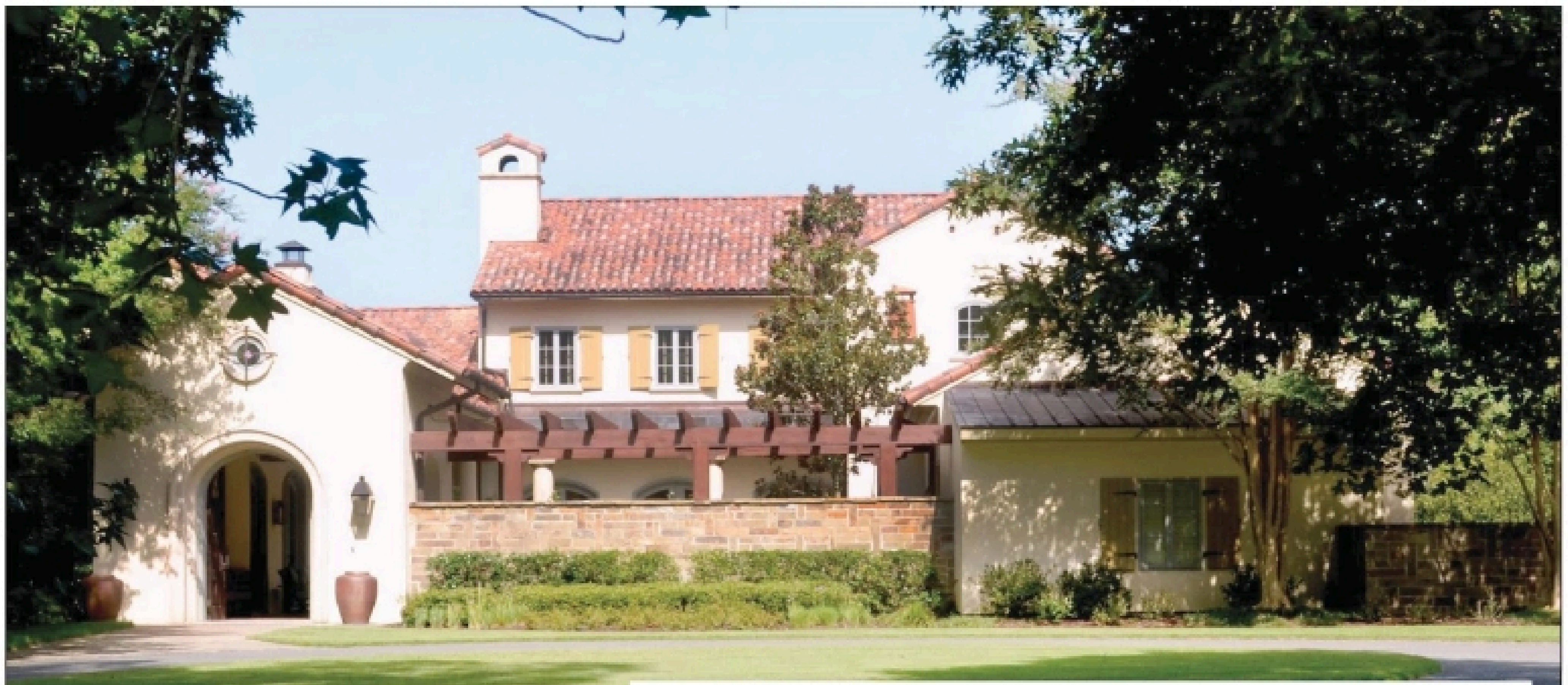




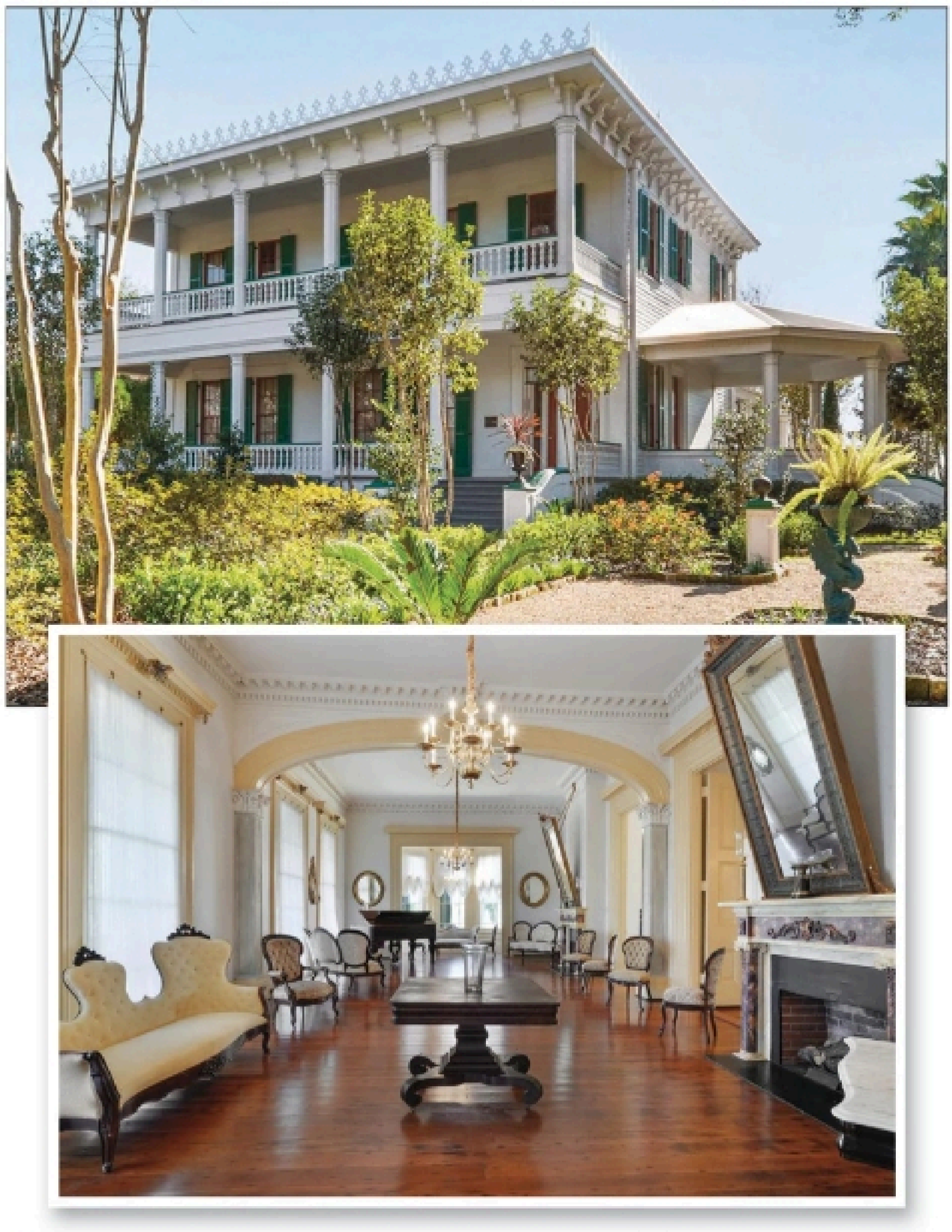
2 ▶ New Orleans Paradise Park, a five-bedroom home a short walk from the French Quarter, was built during the cotton boom of the 1870s. The house has high ceilings, oversize windows, abundant light, and many historic features, as well as a formal parlor, a modern chef's kitchen, a wet bar, and a bath with sculpted art tiling. The landscaped rear courtyard includes a saltwater pool and a spa. $1,690,000. Peter Patout, Talbot Historic Properties, (504) 481-4790

3 ▶ Jarreau Three-bedroom Maison Chenal, 1790, and one-bedroom Lacour House, circa 1750, are the main residences on this historic estate. The 75-acre property also includes Bayou House, 1820, with two bedrooms; many outbuildings; formal gardens; stands of live oak; and a boat lift on False River, an oxbow lake. The estate's famed collection of 17th- and 18th-century French Creole and Acadian art and furniture comes with the purchase. $3,500,000. Peter Patout, Talbot Historic Properties, (504) 481-4790



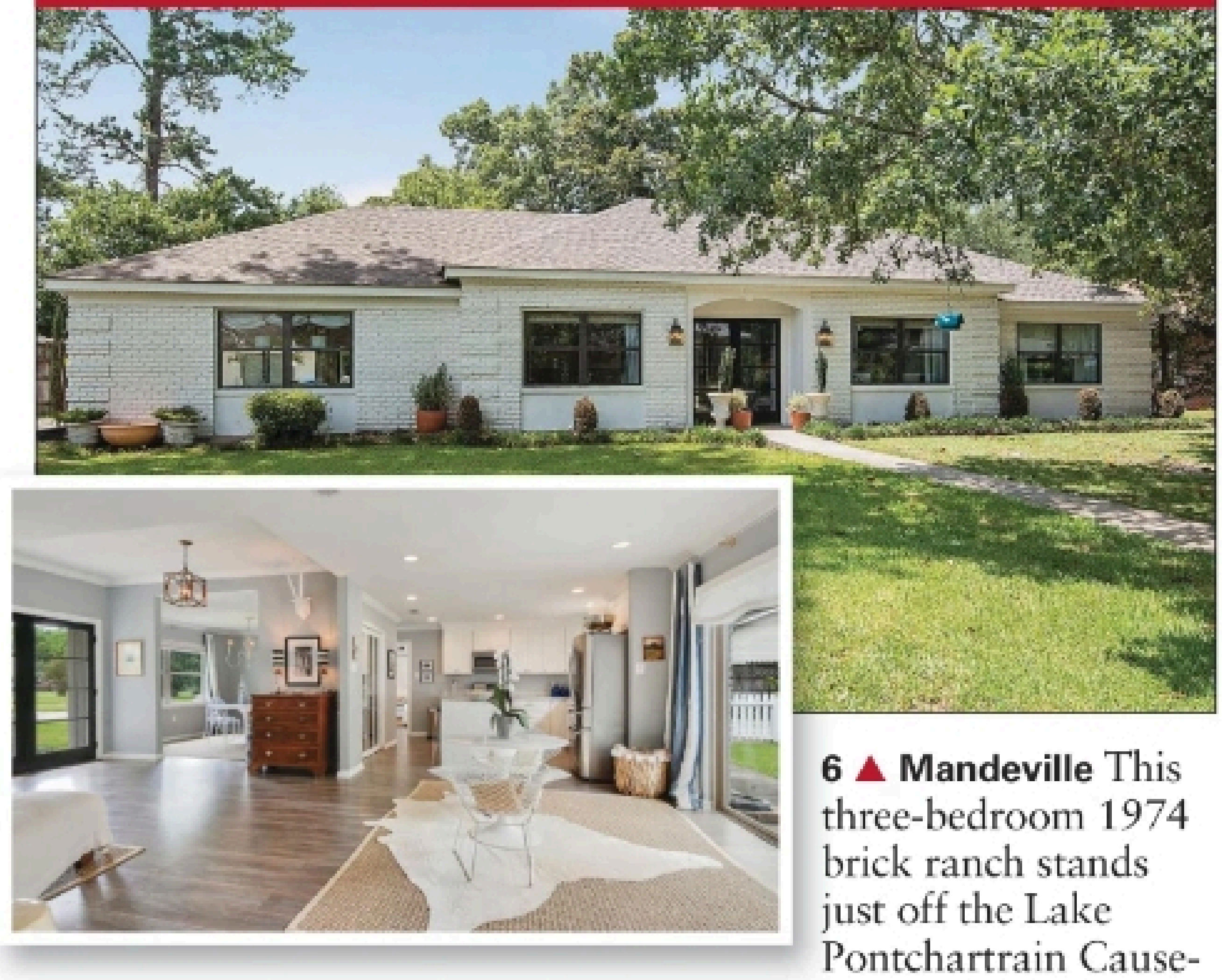


4 ▶ St. Francisville This five-bedroom home is in The Bluffs, a community set on an Arnold Palmer golf course. Built around a central courtyard, the Costa Rican–style villa features vaulted ceilings, arched doorways, exposed beams, and a master suite with a soaking tub. The 3.7-acre property comes with access to community amenities, including pools and fitness facilities. $1,475,000. Ernesto Caldeira, Dorian Bennett/Sotheby's International Realty, (504) 523-1553



5 ▲ Lettsworth White Hall Mansion was built in 1849 by Henry Howard. The four-bedroom main house of a former plantation, it has 14-foot ceilings, the original millwork, ornate moldings, a grand ballroom, expansive galleries, and a covered porch. The 13.8-acre property on the banks of the Atchafalaya River includes two guesthouses, each with two bedrooms; an outdoor kitchen; formal gardens; and a saltwater pool. $2,900,000. Anthony Posey, Anthony Posey Properties, (504) 382-4425

Steal of the week



6 ▲ Mandeville This three-bedroom 1974 brick ranch stands just off the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, across the water from New Orleans. The recently updated, open-plan house features oversize rooms, including formal living, dining, and breakfast rooms; a family room with a film screen and projector; and plenty of natural light. Outside are a fenced backyard, lawns, live oaks, and a large garage converted to a home office and gym. $329,000. Elektra Fortune, Dorian Bennett/Sotheby's International Realty, (504) 236-9547

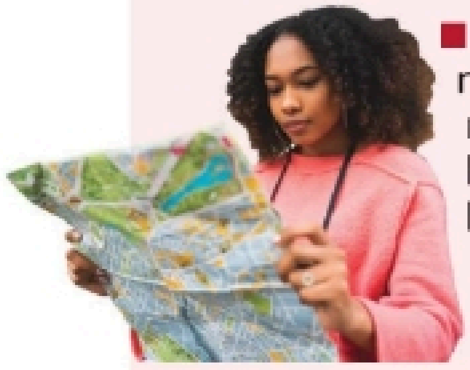
BUSINESS

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Sen. Bernie Sanders received $1.05 million in donations from employees of the five largest tech companies in 2019, more than any other Democratic presidential candidate. Ten Amazon employees identified their occupation as "slave" or "slave labor" when making donations.
Los Angeles Times

■ Airbus supplied 483 more planes than Boeing in 2019, the biggest margin in the companies' 45-year battle. Airbus secured some 700 net orders for narrow-body aircraft. Boeing, which grounded the 737 Max last year after two fatal crashes, lost more deals than it won, ending 2019 down 51 narrow-body orders.
Bloomberg Businessweek



■ Sales of print maps and road atlases have grown by about 10 percent a year since 2014, as more people worry about being tracked or given erroneous directions by their phones. Some 666,000 paper maps and road atlases were sold in 2019.
USA Today

■ Jeff Bezos has bought the Warner estate in Beverly Hills for $165 million, a new high for a home sold in California. The 9-acre property cost the Amazon boss 0.13 percent of his net worth, equivalent to someone who earns $68,000 a year spending $88.
Los Angeles Times

■ Netflix's total energy consumption rose 84 percent last year to 451,000 megawatt-hours. That's enough to power 40,000 American homes for a full year.
Variety

■ Newspaper giant McClatchy Co. has filed for bankruptcy. The family owned firm operates 30 newsrooms, including *The Kansas City Star* and *Miami Herald*. The likely new owner, hedge fund Chatham Asset Management, is expected to hold the company privately.
CNN.com

Apple: Feeling the chill from coronavirus

A shuttered Apple store in Hangzhou

Apple this week became one of the first companies to detail "how the coronavirus that has gripped China was affecting its business," said **Daisuke Wakabayashi** in *The New York Times*, and the news wasn't good. In a rare investor update, the tech giant cut its sales expectations for this quarter, explaining that its supply of iPhones has been hampered by the temporary closure of factories in China. "Apple also said that demand for its devices had been hurt by the outbreak"; it had to close all 42 of its stores in China last month. The revelation pushed the stock market down, since China's network of factories "accounts for a quarter of the world's manufacturing output."

"Apple could finally make investors as concerned as the wider population about the coronavirus," said **Pete Sweeney** and **Robert Cyran** in *Reuters.com.* Despite hints from firms such as Starbucks and Nike about the impact of the disease, the S&P 500 is still trading up nearly 5 percent this year. But with a $1.4 trillion company now sounding the alarm, perhaps the market will wake up to the fact that "everything from vitamins to cars depends on materials and parts from China." The country is also the biggest producer of many drugs, including four out of every five antibiotics in the U.S. So far, we have likely seen only "the ripple effects from the outbreak."

Amazon: Court victory in Pentagon fight

A federal judge last week ordered Microsoft to halt work on its $10 billion cloud computing for the Pentagon, said Kate Conger in *The New York Times*—"a victory for Amazon, which had challenged the awarding of the contract." Amazon had been seen as the front-runner for the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project, but the Pentagon handed the contract to Microsoft last October. Amazon filed a lawsuit claiming that President Trump interfered in the bidding because of his animosity toward CEO Jeff Bezos, who also owns *The Washington Post*. Trump has accused the newspaper of spreading "fake news."

Telecoms: Huawei hit with RICO charges

Federal prosecutors have charged the Chinese telecom giant Huawei with racketeering and conspiracy to steal trade secrets from six U.S. tech companies, said Corinne Ramey and Kate O'Keeffe in *The Wall Street Journal*. Prosecutors said that Huawei stole intellectual property about robotics, cellular antenna technology, and internet-router source code to gain "an unfair competitive advantage." The charges, which Huawei denies, are just the latest shot by the Trump administration against the Chinese firm. The Commerce Department is now weighing rules that would require semiconductor factories around the world to obtain a license if they want to use U.S. equipment to produce chips for Huawei.

Agriculture: Peach farmer wins Bayer, BASF payout

A jury this week ordered Bayer and BASF to pay $265 million to a Missouri peach farmer whose orchard was ravaged by the weed killer dicamba, said Bryce Gray in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Farmer Bill Bader said the herbicide damaged thousands of fruit trees when it drifted across from neighboring cotton fields planted with dicamba-resistant seeds. Dicamba was produced by BASF and Monsanto, bought by Bayer in 2018. The case was the first in a wave of litigation from farmers who blame the German firms for "millions of acres of crop damage."

Banks: HSBC slashes jobs, focuses on Asia

"HSBC said this week it was slashing 35,000 jobs as part of a radical downsizing of its operations in Europe and the U.S.," said David Crow and George Hammond in the *Financial Times*. Europe's largest bank is aiming to cut annual costs by $4.5 billion, shed $100 billion in assets, and focus more heavily on Asia after taking "a $7.3 billion write-down on the value of its investment and commercial banks in Europe." The overhaul comes after former CEO John Flint was fired in August for a turnaround effort that was "too slow and lacked ambition."

The new kings and queens of e-sports

One of the world's oldest games is finding new life online, said Jason Abbruzzese and Kalhan Rosenblatt in *NBCNews.com.* On Twitch—the livestreaming platform where you can watch people play hit video games such as *Fortnite*—"time spent watching chess has risen by 500 percent since 2016." Driving that success are young players, like 24-year-old Alexandra Botez, who have taken old-fashioned "chess hustling" and melded it with "the frenetic, brash world of e-sports." Botez, one of the best players in Canada, is a full-time livestreamer with more than 60,000 followers on Twitch. They tune in to watch Botez take on challengers from around the world and throw out "live commentary and trash talk," and those fans make donations to her as she plays. "Chess has always been a passion of mine, but it was never something that was popular," she said. "It's crazy to me to have this kind of support."

AP, Shutterstock

Education: Giving your school a cut of your salary

A different way to pay for college "shifts financial risk from the student to the school," said **Anne Kadet** in ***The Wall Street Journal.*** So-called income-share agreements, or ISAs, are not new—the economist Milton Friedman floated the concept as far back as 1955—but they are gaining in popularity. More than 60 schools nationwide, including Purdue and the University of Utah, now offer ISAs, in which the schools will front all or part of students' tuition "in exchange for a percentage of its graduates' future earnings," typically 2 to 10 percent for the first five to 10 years after graduation. It could amount to a larger payback than a traditional loan if the graduate "obtains a job earning $100,000 a year," though there is usually a cap on the maximum repayment. The ISA creates a financial "incentive for the school to thoroughly prepare graduates for the workforce and help them find a good-paying job." And "if a career starts slowly, or not at all, the student's obligation drops or goes to zero," said **Mitch Daniels** in ***The Washington Post.*** "By contrast, student debt sits there and compounds," leaving millions struggling to keep up.

Purdue students are being offered ISAs.

Some new coding schools market ISAs as a way to get an education in programming for free, said **Zoe Schiffer** and **Megan Farokhmanesh** in ***TheVerge.com.*** But at the Lambda School, a high-profile online coding academy, students have revolted against "handing over 17 percent of their income." They say classes have been "haphazard," assignments often come from free resources available to anyone on the internet, and the instructors have "changed week to week and often seemed to have no idea what the students had already covered." Following protests from students in one program, Lambda let some of them out of their ISAs. But others might not be as lucky. Lambda's financial agreements let the school "take swift action against students who underreport their incomes or fail to make a payment" by increasing payments by 150 percent or adding a $1,000 monthly fee.

Without federal laws regulating these financial products, banks and colleges get to dictate the terms on ISAs, said **Kevin Carey** in ***The New York Times.*** Legislation floated in the Senate would set some limits but would still allow "payments of 7.5 percent of income that could last for 30 years," effectively garnishing wages "for someone's entire working life." But even with less onerous terms, the ISAs still "walk, talk, and quack like student loans" and can turn into trouble. Purdue is offering ISAs to students who've already maximized their subsidized federal loans, so many grads will face payments that come *on top* of substantial college debt.

What the experts say

A totally new approach to hiring

"The Body Shop will start hiring the first person who applies for any retail job," said Adele Peters in *Fast Company*. The cosmetics retailer is going to skip traditional interviews, background checks, and drug screenings so that "nearly anyone who applies and meets the most basic requirements will be able to get a job, on a first-come, first-served basis." The concept, called "open hiring," was pioneered by Greyston Bakery in New York. After trying the practice in its North Carolina distribution center late last year, Body Shop found that its "monthly turnover rates dropped by 60 percent" and productivity increased—a result, the company says, of eliminating "biases in our recruiting system that are preventing good people from getting into the workforce."

The creeping dread of Mondays

American workers have a bad case of the "Sunday scaries," said Joe Pinsker in *The Atlantic.com.* While "the contours of the standard workweek haven't changed for the better part of a century," the anxiety we feel about returning to the grind on Mondays has intensified. A 2018 LinkedIn survey found that on Sundays, "80 percent of working American adults" begin to fret about their upcoming workload. Researchers have even calculated the average time of onset of "Sunday syndrome" as 3:58 p.m. The exact worry varies—"it might be getting up early, or being busy and 'on' for several days in a row"—but it comes down to overestimating how hard it will be to get through the next week. This anxiety arises because Sundays have become "busier and behaviorally closer to weekdays."

Turning the tables on arbitration

DoorDash workers are forcing the company to go to arbitration in a "juridical man-bites-dog story," said Michael Hiltzik in the *Los Angeles Times*. "Arbitration typically favors the bigger parties," which is why employers thrust arbitration clauses on workers prohibiting them from taking a pay dispute to court. DoorDash's arbitration pact also "required workers to pay a filing fee of $300" if they wanted a hearing, with DoorDash paying $1,900. But when 6,000 arbitration claims were filed against the food delivery firm, totaling "more than $20 million in filing and administrative fees and arbitrators' retainers," the company "blanched." DoorDash sought to avert arbitration and to take the claims to court. A federal judge in San Francisco denied the motion last week, saying such "hypocrisy will not be blessed."

Alamy

Charity of the week

Memphis' **National Civil Rights Museum** **(civilrightsmuseum.org)** is housed in a three-building complex centered on the former Lorraine Motel, where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. Its films and artifacts cover 500 years of history—from slavery through the Civil War, Jim Crow, and the civil rights movement and up to the present day. Interactive exhibits place visitors at key moments in that history. They can sit, for instance, in a vintage bus next to a sculpture of Rosa Parks as they listen to audio of the speech King delivered on the first night of the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott. The museum also regularly hosts events featuring authors, civil rights activists, and speakers to educate visitors and inspire change.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group's highest rating.

Monetary policy: Skepticism greets a Trump Fed nominee

Shelton: Holds views outside the mainstream.

"President Trump hasn't given up his dream of politicizing the Federal Reserve," said **Felix Salmon** in *Axios.com*. After trying and failing to get two sycophants appointed to the Fed board last year—former pizza mogul Herman Cain and economics columnist Stephen Moore—Trump is back with another dubious nominee. Judy Shelton, an economic adviser to the president, holds views that could politely be described as fringe. She wants to curtail the central bank's independence, saying the Fed should have "a more coordinated relationship" with the president. She wants the U.S. to return to the gold standard—something most economists say would cause economic chaos. "For good measure, she also advocated getting rid of deposit insurance," which protects account holders' deposits of up to $250,000 at U.S. banks. Shelton's nomination might go the way of Cain's and Moore's, said **Victoria Guida** and **Katy O'Donnell** in *Politico.com.* At a Senate Banking Committee hearing last week, she "ran into a wall of skepticism." Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) said he was "troubled" by her writings, and Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) said her suggestion that the Fed devalue the dollar in response to currency manipulation by foreign nations was a "very dangerous path to go down." A single GOP committee member voting against Shelton could sink her nomination.

Shelton's only sin is challenging monetary policy groupthink, said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. Her critics claim she's a goldbug, but Shelton doesn't want the Fed to return "to the 19th-century gold standard." Instead, she believes that by analyzing eras in which economies backed their currencies with gold, we can discover "revealing contrasts with the catastrophic misfires of our era of floating rates." Her opponents insist "this is revolutionary, but the late Fed Chairman Paul Volcker also recognized the benefits of stable exchange rates." Shelton is also right to be skeptical of federal deposit insurance, said **Ramesh Ponnuru** in *National Review.com.* You only have to look at the 2008 crash to understand how the guarantee of a government bailout "has the downside of encouraging banks to take risks."

Trump's nominee isn't a brave freethinker, she's "an opportunist and a quack," said **Catherine Rampell** in *The Washington Post*. In the wake of the financial crisis—when, coincidentally, a Democrat was in the White House—Shelton slammed the Fed for ultra-low rates, claiming loose money would create "ruinous inflation." Now, even though the economy is stronger, she supports Trump's call to artificially goose growth by slashing rates. Similarly, pre-Trump, she accused the Fed of weakening the dollar to boost exports. "Now, echoing Trump, she says the Fed should weaken the dollar to boost exports." If she were confirmed to the Fed, this Trump panderer would be stymied by the board's five other appointed members. But should Trump be reelected in November, he might boot independent-minded Fed Chair Jerome Powell and nominate Shelton as his replacement. In that position of power, she could "wreak a lot of damage."

Be careful what tariffs you wish for

Bryan Gruley and Joe Deaux

Bloomberg Businessweek

An American steel manufacturer's experience of the trade war is "an awkward lesson in unintended consequences," said Bryan Gruley and Joe Deaux. When President Trump announced a 25 percent tariff on imported steel in March 2018, John Hritz, president of JSW Steel USA, appeared on Fox Business to call it a "special day." Now, Hritz is suing the administration for refusing to exempt his company from paying the levies on the slabs of steel it needs to import. Hritz was planning to invest $1 billion in two rerolling plants in Texas and Ohio; these plants work around the need for the most expensive machinery by importing so-called "semifinished steel, often in slab form," for processing into finished products. But he was blindsided when Trump lumped semifinished steel in with other steel imports and made it, too, subject to tariffs. The Commerce Department allowed companies to petition for exclusions, but it "was unprepared for the flood of requests," totaling 141,000 as of January. JSW filed six requests, but domestic competitors snarled them. JSW's plants are now "losing money hand over fist" as the firm grapples with tariff costs. Yet "if Hritz is discouraged, it's hard to tell." He's confident the lawsuit "will eventually work in his favor" and that JSW will get back to "Making American Steel Great Again."

Washington's complicity in cybercrime

Linette Lopez

BusinessInsider.com

Our broken political system made the Equifax hack possible, said Linette Lopez. The Department of Justice last week charged four members of the Chinese military with hacking the credit reporting agency in 2017 and stealing the personal information of 147 million Americans. It wasn't a complicated operation—the Chinese easily exploited "a weakness in the dispute-resolution website within Equifax's system." But while Beijing may have snatched our data, Washington was complicit in the theft. For years, tech companies have lobbied against privacy and cybersecurity legislation on a federal level, and lawmakers from both parties have bought their arguments. As a result, we "basically left a key under the mat for the Chinese military to walk right in and loot an American company." What's more, corporate carelessness when it comes to data repeatedly goes unpunished, "so there's no deterrent for stupid behavior." Equifax paid a mere $700 million to settle with the Federal Trade Commission, a pittance when you consider the company earned $3.5 billion in 2019. Similarly, Facebook paid a $5 billion fine to the FTC in 2019 for egregious privacy violations; the company logged $18 billion in profit that year. "If the government wants companies to change their behavior, maybe it should mete out some punishments that actually matter."

AP

The Dodgers fan who elevated baseball writing

Roger Kahn
1927–2020

Roger Kahn wrote some 20 books in his long career, but he was forever defined by one. *The Boys of Summer* (1972) was a wistful rumination on Kahn's lifelong connection to the Brooklyn Dodgers: growing up in their thrall, covering their glory years as a young sportswriter, and following the team's stars—among them Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, and Gil Hodges—as they left the diamond behind and advanced, not always happily, into middle age. Kahn, who had only $380 in the bank when he turned in the manuscript, would sell over 3 million copies, and the book, which took its title from a Dylan Thomas poem and drew on elements of the nascent New Journalism, was hailed as a highwater mark for sportswriting. It's "a baseball book the same way *Moby Dick* is a fishing book," said *Sports Illustrated.*

Kahn was born in Dodger territory, and his high school teacher father "began taking Roger to games as an infant," said the *Los Angeles Times.* His mother, also a teacher, told bedtime stories from Greek mythology and led family readings of classic literature. Kahn attended New York University and then became a copy boy at the *New York Herald Tribune*, where he submitted stories to the sports section. His use of the phrase "a dubious battle," drawn from a Milton poem, in a piece about a pennant race caught the eye of legendary sports editor Stanley Woodward. In 1952, at age 24, Kahn was assigned to cover the Dodgers; he would become the paper's best-paid beat writer, at $10,000 a year.

The Dodgers and New York Giants left for California in 1957, ending "the golden age of baseball in New York," said *The New York Times*. By then Kahn was at *Newsweek*; he'd later write for publications including *Esquire* and *Sports Illustrated* and teach at Yale and Princeton. As an author Kahn covered subjects as diverse as student unrest, Jewish life in America, and his troubled son Roger, who committed suicide in 1987. But he "returned again and again" to baseball, said *The Washington Post*, examining the 1978 Yankees, minor league life, and other topics. "All my life, I've tried to write literature," he wrote. "I am aware that, like Stan Musial and Ted Williams at the bat, most of the time I've failed. But the critical word is 'try.' That effort has been the wonder of my life."

The sculptor who found beauty in metal

Beverly Pepper
1922–2020

In 1962, Beverly Pepper agreed to take part in a sculptural exhibition in the Italian city of Spoleto, unconcerned that all the participating artists had to know how to weld. "I lied," she said. "I figured I could learn between then and the show." Pepper, who'd previously only sculpted in wood, got a crash course in welding from a blacksmith, and the iron-and-steel abstract she created for the show established her as a rising star in what was then the manliest, most muscular visual art. Over the next six decades, she would transform tons of steel, bronze, and stone into towering columns, massive arcs, and reflective pyramids—sculptures that seem to defy gravity and that are now displayed in public spaces and museums from Manhattan to Paris, Boston to Barcelona. "Cast iron is very tough material, as is stone; you have to outwit it," Pepper said. "That's the beauty of it."

She was born in Brooklyn to a fur trader father who once "beat her after she stole a dollar to buy colored pencils," said *The Guardian* (U.K.). Her mother, a civil rights activist, encouraged her daughter to paint; to placate her mother's fears that she'd become a starving artist, Pepper studied advertising design in college. After graduating, Pepper rose to become artistic director at an ad agency, making "the princely sum of $20,000 a year," said the Associated Press. Miserable, she moved to Paris, painting under cubists André Lhote and Fernand Léger. She was transformed again on a 1960 visit to Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple complex. "I walked into Angkor Wat a painter," she said, "and I left a sculptor."

Pepper was among the first artists to use Cor-Ten steel, "which develops a natural sepia patina that resembles rust," said *The New York Times*. Much of her work seems to emerge from the earth, like *Dallas Land Canal and Hillside*, a 265-foot string of steel and turf pyramids set atop a median in the Texas city. "Pepper continued making sculpture well into old age," although she left the fabricating to assistants. Among her final works was a sculptural amphitheater for the Italian city of L'Aquila, which was ravaged by an earthquake in 2009. "Other women want diamonds and fur coats," Pepper said. "I just want to live in a factory."

AP (2)

The singer who took South African sounds global

Joseph Shabalala
1941–2020

Joseph Shabalala brought South African Zulu music to the ears of the world. As founder of the vocal ensemble Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Shabalala led the most successful group in African history, selling more than 30 million albums and performing everywhere from *Sesame Street* to Buckingham Palace and Nelson Mandela's inauguration. The group gained international renown after Paul Simon featured them on his acclaimed 1986 album *Graceland*, recorded in Johannesburg. Simon was criticized for violating the cultural boycott of South Africa's racist apartheid regime, but Shabalala saw a divine hand at work. "Somebody was pushing him, and there's no way to stop it," he said. "The music builds bridges. It's God himself, his spirit."

For Shabalala, a Zulu growing up in apartheid-era South Africa, "work options were limited," said NPR.org. He wanted to become a teacher or a doctor, but he had to quit school at age 12 after his father died and take over his father's work at a white-owned farm. At 17 he moved to the city of Durban, where he fixed cars "while singing at night." In a dream he had a vision of a group that would meld the "warrior-like" sound of the *isicathamiya* music performed by local song-and-dance competition teams with the "textures of Christian choral singing."

Named for his hometown, the color of the strongest oxen, and the Zulu word for ax, Ladysmith Black Mambazo "became one of South Africa's biggest musical attractions," said the *Financial Times.* But even as rewards and awards came his way, Shabalala insisted he didn't lift his voice for recognition. "There is something in me, in my veins, that needs music," he said. "That's all. To me, it is good to sit down and sing."

Exile in Tijuana

Migrants from far beyond the Americas—the ‘extracontinentales’*—have converged on the border city hoping to be let into the U.S., said journalist Jack Herrera in* Politico.com. *Now they may have no way to leave.*

TIJUANA, MEXICO— If you go early in the morning to the plaza in front of El Chaparral, the border crossing where a person can walk from Mexico into the state of California, you’ll hear shouts like “2,578: El Salvador!” and “2,579: Guatemala!”—a number, followed by a place of origin. Every day, groups of families gather around, waiting anxiously underneath the trees at the back of the square. The numbers come from *La Lista*, The List: When a person’s number is called, it’s their turn to ask for asylum in the United States.

Refugees queue for their turn to interview with U.S. immigration authorities.

These days, the most common place-names shouted are Michoacán or Guerrero, Mexican states where intense cartel violence has sent thousands fleeing northward—occasionally, the list keepers will call Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras, countries where pervasive poverty, gangs, drugs, and femicide have done the same. But every so often, the name of a more far-off country is called. In the span of two weeks late last year, list keepers called out numbers for people from Russia, Armenia, Ghana, and Cameroon. Asylum seekers from Congo crossed, as well as Eritreans.

One day, the list keeper called out “*Turquía!*” and a Turkish family rushed forward to claim their spot. The family was escorted by Mexican immigration officials over the walkway into the United States, where they told Customs and Border Protection agents that they had, like everyone else, left their home country fleeing for their lives.

These people were the lucky ones. They had managed to persist in Tijuana, waiting until the day they finally heard their numbers called. Others haven’t been so fortunate. With The List’s queue regularly stretching longer than six months, many migrants fall victim to predatory robbery, kidnapping, or murder before they can find refuge; for others, the wait in one of the most dangerous cities in the world is simply unendurable.

When Americans think of the people crossing the southern border, they might imagine Mexicans or Central Americans—or, even more generally, Latin Americans. But migration, both legal and illegal, from Mexico into the United States is incredibly international. In the course of 2018, Border Patrol agents apprehended nearly 9,000 Indians, 1,000 Chinese nationals, 250 Romanians, 153 Pakistanis, 159 Vietnamese, and dozens of citizens of more than 100 other countries. Fifteen Albanians and seven Italians were stopped trying to cross the southern border, as were four people from Ireland, a single person from Japan, and three people each from Syria and Taiwan. Border Patrol even apprehended two North Koreans on the border in 2018 who were separately attempting to cross into various parts of Texas.

Mexicans call these asylum seekers *extracontinentales*—a word for immigrants who come from outside the Americas. Now, one of the most direct effects of President Trump’s border policy is that thousands of extracontinentales have found themselves unexpectedly stuck on the southern border, waiting for their number to be called from The List.

When I met asylum seekers at El Chaparral and around Tijuana, most of them told me they’d been waiting in the city for months. Even though U.S. law says that anyone who claims to be fleeing for their life should be immediately admitted to a port of entry for vetting, under the Trump administration, Border Patrol has started a controversial policy of “metering.” Now agents accept only a set number of asylum seekers each day and send the rest back. In Tijuana, they accept around 20 to 60 people per day, while thousands are left waiting and more are constantly arriving. That’s how The List was born: Migrants themselves began keeping a ledger as an attempt to create a fair waiting system—a virtual line—to get past the manufactured bottleneck.

Many potentially legitimate asylum seekers who once might have found at least temporary refuge in the United States while their applications were being reviewed are now made to undertake a harrowing and dangerous journey across the world, only to be forced to wait in Mexico’s borderlands—and are less likely than ever to be allowed in later. Across the border, Mexican cities like Tijuana are struggling to deal with a shifting crisis of their own, with thousands of desperate people stuck in a foreign country they never intended to stay in, struggling to survive in a region afflicted by its own intense violence and poverty.

THOUGH THE EXPERIENCE of being a foreigner in northern Mexico can be isolating, Tijuana is a decidedly international city. Long a transit point, it’s become a cosmopolitan center. Russians, for instance, have been arriving in the city since the late 1940s—many fled the former USSR—and there’s even a popular taco stand called “Tacos El Ruso” with a cartoon on the wall that proclaims, “Que Rico Takoskys.”

This multinational character is particularly vivid in the city’s only mosque, a small, plain building in the city’s west, not far from the Pacific Ocean. During Friday prayers in October, I watched as the imam began his sermon in Spanish before transitioning to English—though many of the men gathered didn’t speak either language. “We’ve got people from Egypt, Turkey, Russia, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan—I mean, everywhere. You name it, we’ve got

AFP/Getty (2)

it," Imam Omar Islam, a Mexican-born convert, told me. He says many of the people he meets in the mosque have come fleeing conflict in their home countries, trying to make it to the U.S.

The men mostly arrive in groups with their compatriots—Egyptians with Egyptians, Indians with Indians—but during prayer the group comes together as one, and at the end of the imam's sermon, they rise to greet one another. There was a young man who escaped civil war in Yemen who shook hands with a group of West Africans, including Emmanuel (a pseudonym I'm using to protect his identity), who fled multiple homophobic attacks in Ghana.

Today, as the Trump administration cracks down on the asylum process, many migrants who first intended to go to the U.S. have decided to stay in Mexico. Some seek humanitarian visas, while others try their luck as undocumented immigrants. Emmanuel, however, told me he has no desire to stay in Tijuana. With clear West African features, he stands out, and he says he's been beaten and robbed multiple times by thieves who target the vulnerable migrant population. "I can't stay here. It's too dangerous," he said.

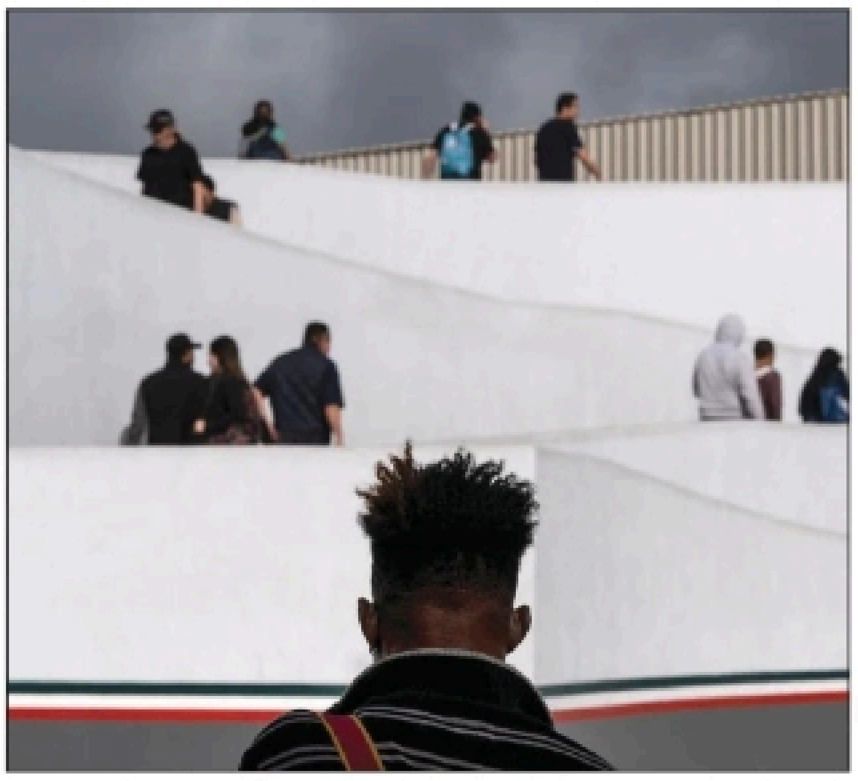
In 2018, Tijuana was, by some measures, the murder capital of the world. And according to reports by the U.S.-based advocacy organization Human Rights First, "refugees and migrants face acute risks of kidnapping, disappearance, sexual assault, trafficking, and other grave harms in Mexico."

Emmanuel plans on crossing the border and asking for asylum in the United States, but his number on The List is weeks, if not months, away. After his last robbery, he says he can't afford rent. He's desperate, and unsure what to do. For many of these extracontinentales stalled in the north of Mexico, the U.S. border is simply the final obstacle at the end of an immense odyssey.

There's a fairly straightforward reason why so many people from around the world end up in northern Mexico, even though their ultimate destination is the United States: visa restrictions. For many people, it's impossible to fly straight to the U.S. without a visa, so many asylum seekers fly into Latin American countries with the plan to travel northward.

For people with stronger passports, like Russian, Indian, and Chinese nationals, it's possible to fly directly into Mexico. Many of the extracontinentales land first in Mexico City or Cancún, where they masquerade as tourists before making their way to the border. The rate of arrival is higher than you might think: On a single Monday when I was in Tijuana, six Russians and two Chinese nationals were detained at the airport on charges of traveling with forged or improper documents; they were promptly returned.

But many people from African and Middle Eastern countries have trouble securing travel even to Mexico. So, for forced migrants like Emmanuel, the journey through the Americas begins much further south, in Ecuador, one of the few countries on the planet where, until recently, Ghanaians could travel without a visa. From Ecuador, the path to the U.S. demands a trek into Colombia, and then to the border with Panama. At this point, the journey becomes incredibly perilous. Many do not survive.



El Chaparral, the crossing into the U.S.

THERE IS NO road between the jungles of northern Colombia through the swamps into central Panama. Traveling on foot, northbound migrants must walk first over cloud forest and then across 50 miles of marshland, through a stretch of sparsely populated wilderness called the Darién Gap. The trip is, by all accounts, brutal. Reporting from northern Mexico in the past year, I've spoken with asylum seekers from Ghana, Cameroon, Venezuela, and Congo who all said they had made this trek.

The stories they tell are harrowing: People die from snakebite or from drowning. Many eat nothing but uncooked rice for the week it takes to transit the Gap. Along the migration routes, human traffickers, kidnappers, and robbers prey on travelers. People get robbed in every country, but every person I spoke with, without exception, said they were robbed at gunpoint by bandits in the jungle in Panama.

Emmanuel made the journey northward from Ecuador not just once, but twice. After he first fled homophobic violence in Ghana in 2016, Emmanuel made it to the U.S. border and crossed at the official port of entry. As he argued his asylum case in court, he remained in Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention. He says he learned his English while there. After almost two years, Emmanuel was hopeless and depressed. He decided he couldn't stay locked up anymore and chose to give up on his asylum case. ICE deported him back to Accra.

Once returned to Accra, Emmanuel was attacked again by the men who originally persecuted him. Emmanuel says he's not gay, but he welcomed LGBTQ patrons into the mechanic's shop he ran. Nevertheless, people in his community accused him of being gay and tried to kill him, he says. He showed me huge scars on his belly from stab wounds and a video someone filmed soon after he was returned to Ghana showing him bloody and unconscious in a crowded hospital.

Fearing death, Emmanuel escaped again and flew back to Ecuador this past spring. He says the journey is the hardest thing he's ever done. But still, he chose to make the trek a second time. He says he had no choice. He is certain he'll be killed if he ever returns.

In July, the Trump administration announced it would no longer accept asylum applications from people who transited through a third country on their way to the U.S. Anyone who traveled through Mexico without first applying for asylum there could be returned automatically. The asylum restriction, immediately challenged in court, has been temporarily upheld by the Supreme Court pending a final decision. If the new restrictions stand, the wait for the extracontinentales could turn out to be permanent. The new rules also mean that asking for asylum in the U.S. now comes with a dramatically increased risk of deportation back to one's home country.

But people trying to reach the U.S. were already en route when the newest restriction was announced. Emmanuel was making his way through Guatemala. The promise of the United States, of freedom from persecution and violence, persuaded Emmanuel and thousands like him to travel tens of thousands of miles, across oceans and mountains. Steps away from the southern border, they learned that the door had been slammed shut. Tijuana was never meant to be the final destination for Emmanuel or so many other asylum seekers. Rather, the city is just a place they've wound up *atrapado*—stuck.

Excerpted from an article that originally appeared in Politico.com. *Used with permission.*

The Puzzle Page

Crossword No. 540: And We're Live by Matt Gaffney

1	2	3	4	5	■	6	7	8	9	■	10	11	12	13
14					■	15				■	16			
17					18					■	19			
■	■	20					■	■	21	22				
23	24		■	25			26	27						
28			29		■	30					■	31		
32				■	■	■	33				34	■	■	■
■	35			36	37	38						39	40	■
■	■	■	41					■	■	■	42			43
44	45	46	■	47				48	■	49				
50			51						52		■	53		
54						■	■	55			56		■	■
57				■	58	59	60						61	62
63				■	64				■	65				
66				■	67				■	68				

ACROSS

1 Uses Amazon, e.g.
6 Two-syllable part of a poem
10 Dr. Seuss title word
14 Slow down, as a process
15 "March Madness" org.
16 Eliminator of wrinkles
17 ABC sitcom that aired a live episode on Feb. 11, as the title family watched the New Hampshire election results come in on TV
19 Carvey of comedy
20 Columbus' hometown
21 Second-wealthiest Democrat in the primaries
23 "Eureka!"
25 Sitcom that ran a 1985 live episode in which the family's cat ran away
28 Like good slippers
30 ___ living (make ends meet)
31 Low on rain
32 Cuisine with satay
33 Every afternoon, say
35 This daytime soap ran a week of live episodes in May of 2002
41 Last round at Wimbledon
42 Kitchen supply
44 Male issue
47 ___ metabolic rate
49 "___ Crime" (Sade single)
50 This drama aired a live episode in 2005 centered on a debate between two presidential candidates
53 One of a gallon's 16
54 Too
55 Brownish-gray
57 Unsophisticated person
58 NBC sitcom that ran its entire third season (2015-16) as live episodes, after which it was canceled
63 Vacation
64 Venus doesn't have one
65 Become inedible
66 Gets a look at
67 Predator's lunch
68 Trane played them

DOWN

1 Abbr. in a Beatles album title
2 "Come again?"
3 1971 Charlton Heston drama, with *The*
4 Purplish-brown
5 Like Twinkies
6 Formally, but not actually
7 Card without a number
8 Ruin
9 *The Merchant of Venice* schemer
10 Duck with soft feathers
11 Showed one's age, in a way
12 Approach
13 Like many Twitter comments
18 "___ didn't!" (phrase of denial)
22 Sport without pitches
23 Congressional achievement
24 Swiss roll lookalike
26 Enacted
27 Part of Q.E.D.
29 Feudal estate
34 Putter's nerves, with "the"
36 Written slander
37 Not hitting well lately
38 Swift
39 Organ with a wide range of sounds
40 Words to Brutus
43 Stuff in a trunk
44 Gets the ball rolling
45 Sarcastic words of disbelief
46 No seasoned pro
48 Laundry list
49 "That sounds about right"
51 "While My Guitar Gently ___"
52 D.C. batter
56 Smurf with a beard
59 Word seen near "neither"
60 Stag's mate
61 Perjure oneself
62 African Ernie

The Week Contest

This week's question: Scientists have discovered a rare and remarkably sedentary species of olm—a cave-dwelling salamander—that can live into its hundreds and typically moves less than 32 feet a decade; one stayed in the same spot for seven years. Please come up with the title of a self-help book touting the health benefits of taking life as slow as an olm.

Last week's contest: A Silicon Valley CEO recently posted a 1,061-word ad online for a nanny for her twins, explaining she was seeking someone who could cook organically, drive in the snow, ski and swim, teach math, and "strategically" plan vacations. If Hollywood were to make a movie about the super nanny who gets this gig, what title could it give the film?

THE WINNER: "Nanny G.O.A.T."
Ann Trodello, Fitchburg, Mass.

SECOND PLACE: "Mrs. Onfire" —Laurel Rose, *Pittsburgh*

THIRD PLACE: "The Uncanny Nanny"
Suzanne Prinz, Greenville, S.C.

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Olm life" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Feb. 25. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, Feb. 28. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

THE WEEK
Out of the shadows

◀ **The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week.***

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: medium

2		6		3		8		9
				9				
1		9		4		2		7
				2				
3		8		1		5		4
				8				
	5		8		1		2	
	6		9		3		4	
	9		4		2		7	

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

©2020. All rights reserved.

The Week (ISSN 1533-8304) is published weekly with an additional issue in October, except for one week in each January, June, July, and September.

The Week is published by **The Week** Publications, Inc., 155 East 44th Street, 22nd fl., New York, NY 10017. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **The Week**, PO Box 37252, Boone, IA 50037-0252. One-year subscription rates: U.S. $150; Canada $180; all other countries $218 in prepaid U.S. funds. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40031590, Registration No. 140467846. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6.

The Week is a member of The New York Times News Service, The Washington Post/Bloomberg News Service, McClatchy-Tribune Information Services, and subscribes to The Associated Press.

HMRS

Sources: A complete list of publications cited in *The Week* can be found at theweek.com/sources.

Photo By
MATT SAYLES

> “When my mom was diagnosed with cancer, I wanted her to have access to the best treatments available.”

SONEQUA MARTIN-GREEN
Stand Up To Cancer Ambassador

THAT’S WHY I’M SO PASSIONATE ABOUT EXPANDING AWARENESS OF CLINICAL TRIALS

You want the best treatments for your loved ones. My mom’s cancer was treated using a therapy made possible by clinical trials. I want all people diagnosed with cancer to have access to the treatments that will make them long-term survivors, like my mom.

Cancer clinical trials may be the right option for you or a loved one. The more information you have about clinical trials, the more empowered you will be to seek out your best treatments.

Learn more at StandUpToCancer.org/ClinicalTrials

STAND UP TO CANCER®

Stand Up To Cancer is a division of the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

S

SCIENCE

T

E

M

MATH

ad
COUNCIL

EVER WONDER IF THERE’S LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS?

LUCIANNE WALKOWICZ
ASTRONOMER, THE ADLER PLANETARIUM

GIRLS IN STEM BECOME WOMEN WHO CHANGE THE WORLD.
LEARN MORE **@SHECANSTEM** ON INSTAGRAM